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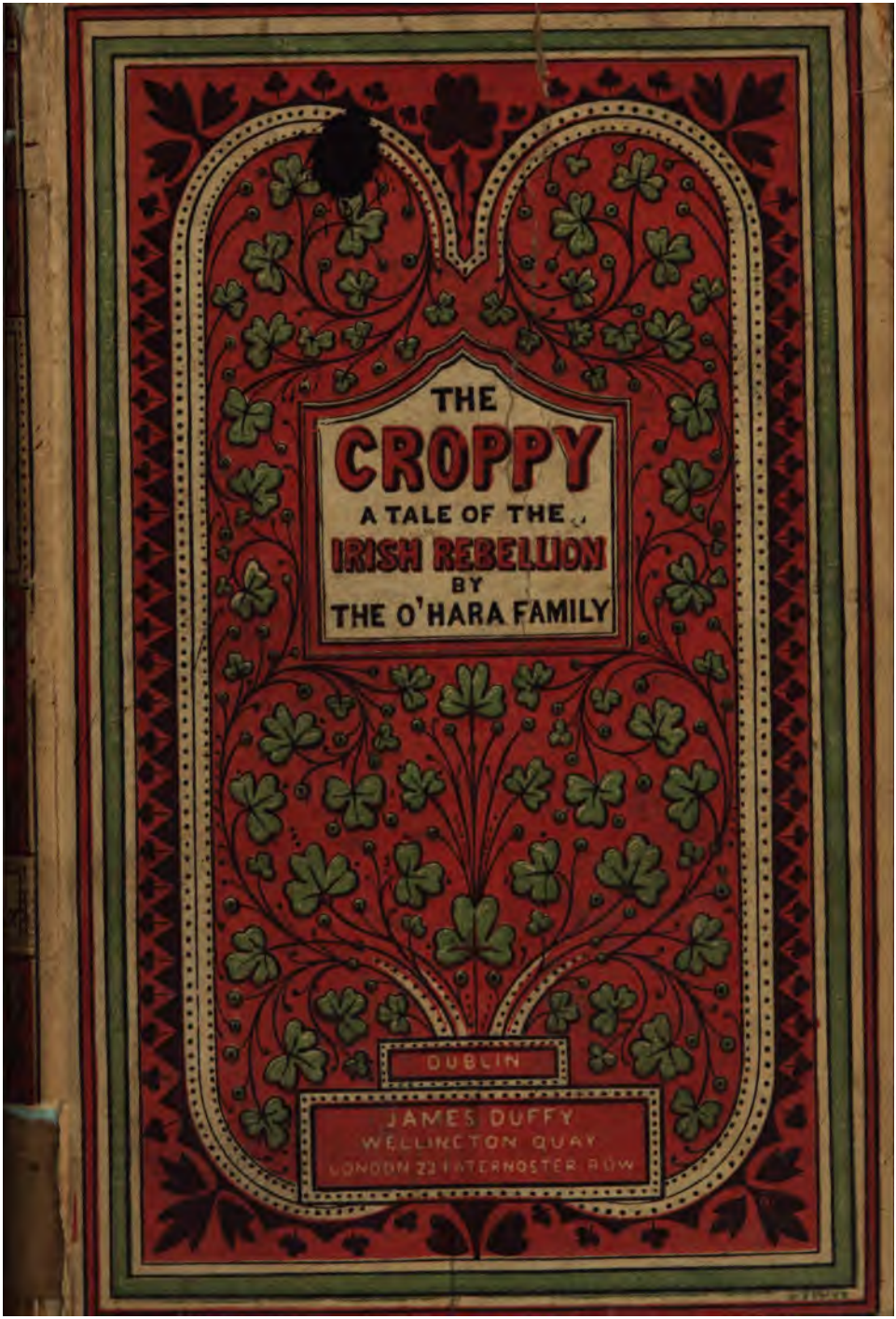
THE
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A TALE OF THE
IRISH REBELLION
BY
THE O'HARA FAMILY
DUBLIN
JAMES DUFFY
WELLINGTON QUAY
LONDON 22 PATERNOSTER ROW

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WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY MICHAEL BANIM, ESQ.,

THE SURVIVOR OF THE "O'HARA FAMILY."

"THE UNCIVIL KERNES OF IRELAND ARE IN ARMS."

SECOND PART OF KING HENRY VI.

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PREFACE.

THE "CROPPY" was written by Abel O'Hara, the stay-at-home member of the family, and now the Editor of the tale for Mr. Duffy's edition.

I found it difficult when I made preparation for the story, to obtain from any then extant book, a reliable history of the rebellion of 1798. Sir Richard Musgrave's publication, I could not regard in any other light than as an untruthful narrative of the period;—which it is now generally pronounced to be by all parties. A book by a person named Taylor came into my hands; professedly a statement of the occurrences of the County Wexford insurrection: this I found to be altogether a one-sided production; facts misstated; the outrages of one party exaggerated. The provocative outrages of the other, either entirely unnoticed, or justified. The book, in fact, not to be counted on as an authority.

The best book I could find referring to the Wexford outbreak was one published by the Rev. Mr. Gordon, a Protestant Clergyman. This I consulted with confidence, anxious as I was to form a true conception of the time I had undertaken to treat of. Many books are now available not then in existence; and the historical truth I wished to find, I had to search for in the ephemeral publications of the years preceding and inclusive of the year 1798. The lengthened notes I then made, I still possess, and I may occasionally quote from.

The historical introductory chapter to the Croppy was much more diffuse, when I sent the tale to my brother, than it is at present; too lengthened, in fact, for the place it was to hold. Of this I was conscious myself, and I requested Barnes O'Hara to use his pruning-knife at discretion. With this request of mine he complied quite to my satisfaction. On re-reading, I am inclined to think it is even yet too long. Some such introduction was, however, necessary, and my conscience tells me, that the chapter is historically accurate.

MICHAEL BANIM.

THE CROPPY;

A TALE OF 1798.

—o—

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

INTRODUCTORY and historical, and not comprising a word of the Tale to which it leads,—so that some readers will probably pass it by. Yet we intreat all who wish really to understand even the more fictitious parts of our story, to give it an indulgent and careful perusal.

Few can forget that, in the year 1798, a wide-spread conspiracy, which partially exploded, existed amongst Irishmen of every rank and sect. Which conspiracy had in view a separation from England, and the establishing, upon the ruins of British dominion, an Irish Republic.

The name adopted by the conspirators was that of United Irishmen. But as this name was inherited by them, the necessary task of explaining its nature and import cannot be accomplished without tracing it from its source.

In 1777, Britain was engaged in the war with her Colonies. France, entering into alliance with America, had sent the soldiers of her despotic monarchy to fight for republicanism. England, in want of troops, withdrew her garrisons from Ireland, in order to transport them over the Atlantic. Ireland then remained without an army to protect her against a threatened French invasion. She demanded succour from England, and understood that she must defend herself.

The Irish flew to arms. In a short time, a great national force, self-raised, self armed, self-equipped, and well-disciplined, stood forward to meet the expected foe. None appeared; but had the contrary been the case, such was the steady, thorough chivalrous spirit of military ardour possessing the country from north to south, that, in any struggle with an invading enemy, Ireland must have

triumphed. The Irish Volunteers were acknowledged by the legislature as "the saviours of their country."

In order to become a Volunteer, certain outlays, requiring considerable means, were to be incurred. Hence, the Volunteer ranks were composed of those classes who, by habits or education, are raised above the mere headlong zeal of the multitude. They were reflecting citizens, as well as chivalrous soldiers.

Church of England Protestants, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics, stood side by side in this national band. Under the old penal code, then in almost full force, persons of the last-mentioned persuasion could not, indeed, legally bear arms:—in some instances in the North, their offers of service were coldly or offensively repulsed. But this disrelish to fight for country or home by their side, was by no means general. The terrors of the Statute-book did not damp their own ardour. Forgetting the clank of their chains in the rattling of arms, they appeared members of almost every corps in the kingdom.

Having scared away from their shores England's most formidable enemy, the Volunteers continued to be the only army of their country. In the absence of opportunity for the exercise of their military character, they began to contemplate, as politicians, the position of that country. Her legislature and her trade first fixed their attention. The one they found destitute of the power of real enactment; the other they found grievously restricted. They petitioned for the emancipation of both. England, still without troops to support a refusal, acceded to their demands. In 1782, Ireland owed to her armed citizens of every sect, an independent Parliament and a free trade. The steady union of her children made her a nation.

The independence of their legislature thus secured, the Volunteers turned their eyes to the construction of that legislature itself.

Presbyterian Ulster had set the example of uniting the deliberative and military characters. The first imposing assemblage, in which the soldier, leaning on his musket, debated the politics of his country, consisted exclusively of Volunteer delegates from that province. It was followed up, in Dublin, by a meeting of representatives of all the corps of Ireland, who, in imitation of the American Assembly, called themselves a congress. From this body emanated a petition for reform in Parliament.

But England could now more safely refuse. Her transatlantic warfare was ended; she had troops at command. The prayer of the Irish "Congress" was promptly and disdainfully rejected.

The Reformers, boasting of their physical power to enforce com-

pliance, renewed and increased their clamour. They were firmly answered. A war of words ensued; they branding the legislature as corrupt and odious:—the legislature, in return, attributing to them disloyal principles, and classing them with the French anarchists, whose first sanguinary acts then began, unluckily for the cause of legitimate freedom, to disgust the world.

Omitting the details of this struggle of the two parties, it will be convenient for our purpose to pass from 1784 to 1792, and examine the position and state of the Volunteers at the latter-mentioned period. And, at a glance, we find them, from many causes, decreased in numbers, influence, and importance.

In the first petition for an independent Parliament and a free trade, every Volunteer, from the landed proprietor to the mechanic, had felt a common interest. In that for Parliamentary reform, many aristocratic members of the national army, who held seats in the Lower House, did not conceive that their interests were regarded. In consequence, they ceased to be Volunteers. Other moderate men, fearful of being classed by Government amongst those whom it denounced as enemies, seceded, with a prudent foresight, to save themselves from future results. Some of these latter rallied, heart and hand round King and Constitution; some formed themselves into an aristocratic body, called the Whig Club, which, as it too professed reforming views, though of a limited kind, could not have failed to divide their own ranks against the Volunteers. But the chief cause for the breaking up of the old Volunteer spirit remains to be noticed.

Although Roman Catholics had generally been admitted into the national band, a very considerable portion of their fellow-soldiers,—almost all, in fact, professing the established religion,—never contemplated making them the better for any political advantages which they were to assist in attaining. They might aid, for instance, in securing an independent Parliament, but should not be permitted to vote at the election of its members:—much less to aspire to the honour of being members of it themselves. In 1792, the Presbyterian portion of the diminished body of Volunteers, (diminished by causes glanced at above,)—were willing, perhaps out of policy, to recruit their ranks, as well as from higher motives, to join to their demand for Parliamentary reform a prayer for Catholic relief. The defection instantly followed of all who regarded such a measure with inherited prejudice; who conscientiously deemed its success incompatible with the existence of Church and State; or who merely felt it opposed to their individual interests. Joining

together, they formed a body, styled "Protestant Ascendancy," of which the principles, put forward in the shape of a manifesto, by the consistent corporate monopolists of the capital, breathed against Roman Catholics utter exclusion from civil and political privileges.

Government did not fail to take advantage of their disunion more effectually to suppress the Volunteers. A force, called Fencibles, was raised expressly for the purpose of overawing them; and this manifest wish to get rid of the Volunteers, deprived them of the last peaceable adherents who considered implicit obedience as a duty. Through many parts of the South of Ireland, too, corps threw up their arms in disgust. The legislature had called them "the saviours of their country;" it now called them incendiaries. Personal, if not national pride, could not brook the change of opinion. And from these different causes we behold, in 1792, but a skeleton of the national body which, with spirit to wield its strength, and with mind to direct that spirit, had, a few years before, been so imposing. We behold, in fact, a people whom union had made formidable to others, and of service to their country, grown, by disunion, contemptible to the world, and party with party, as they stand, a curse to their country. Forsaking their national standard, we see them once more ranged, in almost rabble groups, under the old tattered banners which, during her miserable contentions of six hundred years, had fluttered, like scarecrows, over Ireland, to put to flight all national peace, all collective, and much of individual importance, and to "fright the isle from her prosperity."

But, generally speaking, the corps of the Ulster Presbyterians, together with some corps in Dublin, retained their muskets and field-pieces, and attended to military exercise at the same time that they formed themselves into new combinations.

Belfast, the capital of the Protestant North, first gave birth to political clubs, which, in imitation of similar ones in France and England, sought, by means of correspondence, publication, and otherwise, to disseminate beyond their own circle, opinions upon the Government under which they lived. One of similar character followed in Dublin; and, long after the year 1792, to Dublin, and to Belfast such associations were almost exclusively limited.

Their members, in both places, may emphatically be termed the last of the Volunteers. The declared objects of all were, a full Reform in Parliament, and a full emancipation of Roman Catholics. And the title adopted by them, in 1792, and now first fixed, was that of UNITED IRISHMEN.

It can scarce be doubted that their leaders contemplated, even in

the outset, a separation from England. Many of them were republicans in principle. Late treatises serve to show that their alleged objects were advanced but as a false flag, under which to marshal the timid or wavering of their own sect, and, if possible, the neutral Catholics, who even then formed three-fourths of the population of Ireland. Until events, contrived or expected, might gradually adapt all to views of a more extended nature.

These expected events rapidly occurred. Republican France triumphed over the combined armies of Europe. Her success served at once to indicate, and to propose to others for adoption, the principle for which she fought and conquered. Along with conviction, it inspired boldness. Hence, no doubt, the United Irish Clubs imbibed their confirmed hostility to English dominion in Ireland, as well as the audacious tone of denunciation and defiance which breathed through their published sentiments, whether put forth in the shape of resolutions or pamphlets, both eloquently penned, against the existing order of things.

At length matters came for the present to a crisis. Under the very eye of "the Castle," appeared in Dublin an armed band, styling themselves, in almost avowedly republican phrase, Irish National Guards. They wore green uniform, the national colour. Their standard was a harp, without a crown. Upon a particular day they were to muster, as if to show their strength. The Lord Lieutenant issued his proclamation against such a meeting. The garrison of Dublin prepared to support his manifesto; and the National Guards had no review-day.

A previous identity between this band and the United Irish Clubs is not proved; but such identification seems to have soon taken place. Against the Lord Lieutenant's proclamation, the Dublin Club issued a counter proclamation, approving and encouraging the National Guards. The secretary, who signed the paper, was convicted of sedition. After the publication of another philippic against Government, a meeting of the United Irish of Dublin was dismissed by the sheriff, as persons holding seditious and republican views. * Thus, in 1794, terminated the legal existence of the last of the Volunteers of 1782; convened, under their new name, two years and a half previously.

* Nor was the charge made on light grounds. A Protestant clergyman. the Rev. Wm. Jackson, had, through the treacherous agency of a London attorney, Cockaigne, (a good name for a London attorney,) been detected, in Dublin, in the character of a French emissary to the discontented Irish.

But though the Republican Clubs were thus legally suppressed, their spirit was not wholly extinguished. In Dublin, indeed, no trace of them existed. But in Belfast, to which we must still refer for a persevering adherence to the cause, one club of United Irish, which, from its insignificance, had not attracted notice, continued clandestinely to meet. By it, consisting exclusively of persons below the middle ranks of life, was first organized, and brought to a pitch of subtile perfection that able and instructed men, its subsequent adherents, could not improve, the more regular conspiracy against English connexion, which, in the year 1798, partially broke forth in different districts of Ireland.

Not till two years after their new constitution were the members of this confederacy joined in Dublin by the influential persons who had composed the former and more open Clubs:—not till the close of 1797 did the conspiracy make any considerable progress in the South of Ireland. In other words, the Roman Catholic force of the country did not become United Irishmen, before that period.

But many of their superiors, of the same religious persuasion, had, some time previously, joined, from various causes, the councils of the Protestant Revolutionists.

Before the upraising of the national voice, by the old Volunteers in 1782, the Catholics had considered themselves, as on all hands they were considered, an unimportant portion, though by far the greater portion, of the Irish people. A century of degradation, under the overwhelming pressure of the penal code, naturally imparted to them this instinct of insignificance. Shackles sink the slave in his own estimation, as well as in that of his master. Even for their rights, they had not dared to speak out, as a body. Any murmur that escaped them was but the unheard whisper of a fear. But inspired, doubtless, by the manful appeals of their Protestant fellow-countrymen, they began, after the year 1792, more boldly to approach the legislature. A petition for relief appeared from their body, which now became newly and formidably organized. Although it was indignantly rejected, still, nearly at the same time, Government introduced a bill repealing some of the most odious of the penal statutes. Their junction with the Reformers was apprehended; and, while nothing would be granted to their presumptuous request, something was voluntarily vouchsafed to keep them quiet.

The daring of the Catholics, and most of all its partial success, after centuries of terrified inaction and passive slavery, caused a great ferment among the "Protestant Ascendancy:" and never, perhaps, even in Ireland, did ferment more vigorously manifest

itself. At city and county meetings convened by sheriffs, at grand jury sittings, and corporation meetings and guilds, not only were manifestoes against Catholic freedom agreed to, but vituperation of Catholic tenets was indulged in. All that could offend and goad, as well as all that could defeat, marked the clamour of the interested monopolists. The Catholics, to the increased astonishment of their hitherto colonial masters, retorted in publications which paid abuse with abuse, and absolutely attacked, in turn, the theology of their political anathematists. "Ascendancy" rejoinders followed, in which some individuals connected with Government took a part. The Catholics saw, that from the dominant party of the land, they had no chance of favour.

Still, however, they remained unconnected, as a body, with the other party; and, in 1793, made a grand effort to rise beyond the clamour and intrigues of their domestic enemies, by carrying their petitions to the very foot of the throne. Their success, considering it as a first attempt in diplomacy, was surprising. At first refused the ear even of the secretary, in London, they ultimately wrought their way, by perseverance and cleverness, to the presence of the Sovereign himself; were most graciously received; obtained the royal promise that their prayer should be recommended. And, at the close of the year, additional concessions—much short of their hopes, however—were granted to them.

Louder than ever arose the angry voice of the Ascendancy men. All means of defeat were set to work; and the exclusionists at last seemed to triumph. The determination to limit relief to the concessions already made, was authoritatively promulgated. All future hope thus shut out, under the existing order of things, the Catholics began to turn their eyes towards the friends who, though also differing from them in creed, promised, under a proposed change, to grant them full and equal privileges.

Whilst, with a few exceptions, Catholics of intellect and consideration still, however, held back, a well-known event precipitated them into a junction with the United Irish. In 1795, Earl Fitzwilliam became chief governor of Ireland, upon the understanding that, while going certain lengths to satisfy the Protestant Reformers, he was to grant complete relief to Catholics. The Irish people were allowed to believe that the day of grace was now indeed at hand. But, so soon as the war supplies had been voted, Lord Fitzwilliam received a summons to return to England. The promises he had been allowed to hold out were broken; the vivid hopes of the Catholic leaders changed into blank despair. And

while the triumphant shouts of the "Ascendancy" rang in their ears, many of them became, through mixed feelings of wrath and self-assertion, sworn enemies of the national connexion which seemed to doom them to perpetual insult and inferiority.

The previous policy of the United Irish Clubs must have produced, to a certain extent, this final result. Their very name was an invitation to Catholics to join them. Their published sentiments, as well as declared objects, graced and strengthened the invitation. Privately, socially, and upon every possible occasion, they farther held out to the people, whose physical strength they knew how to value, the hand of fellowship. The celebrated Wolfe Tone admits, in his auto-biography, this system of conciliation. Perhaps it may even be deduced, from his curious statements, that his own appointment, as secretary to the Catholics, was not exclusively the result of Catholic admiration of his talents, and of his zeal in their cause. Catholic leaders were invited to Belfast, to witness a display of Protestant liberality towards them. The following year, their deputations to the King were induced to make Belfast their route to England, and the Protestant population of that town drew them in their carriages through the streets.

But whilst from the year 1795 may be dated the junction of influential Catholics with the Republicans, the lower orders of their religion did not, as was before remarked, conspire against English connexion till the end of the year 1797. Hence, it will at once be suggested, that the Catholic gentleman and the Catholic peasant were not urged into the conspiracy by the same causes, or with the same views and feelings. We proceed to close our brief historical sketch by showing that they were not. In the ranks of the Volunteers, Protestant hatred of Catholics experienced much alleviation. But amongst the lower orders of Protestants, of whom those ranks comprised few or none, the old spirit of the admirers of Oliver Cromwell or of George Walker continued, nothing the worse for the wear, to manifest itself, in loathing and abhorrence, against the few Catholic peasants left in the thrice-colonized province of Ulster. Between reasoning men of the rival persuasions a philosophical feeling of brotherhood rapidly went on;—their inferiors were, meantime, cutting each others' throats.

In 1785, the county of Armagh became the arena of a petty though cruel warfare. Under the title of "Peep-o'-day-boys," the lower orders of Protestants scoured, in bands, the Catholic districts, and, sanctioned, by the penal law, still unrepealed, appropriated all descriptions of Catholic fire-arms. Nor was their zeal always con-

fined to a discharge of this self-conferred, though legal, *surveillance*. Insult and outrage were, on such occasions, generally experienced by the proscribed people.

After some years of trembling passiveness, the Catholics formed themselves into counter-associations, of which the very name—"Defenders"—indicates the spirit and nature. Both combinations gradually spread into Connaught and Leinster, and, in 1793, *Defenderism* reached the scene of our tale, the county of Wexford.

But in the provinces mentioned, so far from the point of its origination, and amid a population almost exclusively Catholic, Defenderism diverged from its primary character. Amongst district bodies, in different districts, were vague notions of self-assertion, each provoked by some local grievance, or by exactions deemed to be such. One band of Defenders opposed the payment of tithes, whether legally demanded in the name of the parson, or dictated in the shape of christening and marriage fees, by priests of their own persuasion. Other bands rose against the militia ballot, to which the lower orders were not used, and of which they could not understand the justice.

In 1795, the Defenders proceeded to open and ferocious insurrection. They were summarily dealt with. Without trial of any kind, military commanders sent hundreds of them to the fleets. About fourteen hundred were, indeed, thus disposed of, notwithstanding all provisions of British law to the contrary; and an indemnity bill soon screened the law-breakers. But the Irish peasant felt that he had been illegally as well as cruelly dealt with. And now was first blended with the wild habits of combination, taught him by the Peep-o'-day-boys of the North, a sentiment of hatred towards that Government which seemed to depart from its own fixed principles of justice, solely in order to crush him.

During the operation of this system of prompt chastisement, the Soldiery had been let loose among the people. To such an extent was their disorderly violence carried, that the veteran Abercrombie, after a tour of inspection, subsequently described them as "in a state of licentiousness which must render them formidable to every one but the enemy." Again, the southern peasant hated the power which used instruments so sanguinary. Revenge upon both became the wish of his heart. And when agents of the United Irish conspiracy found it convenient to make the parish Defender a National Revolutionist, he rushed madly into the field, rejoicing in any cause that proposed an opportunity for retaliation, and but too well pre-

pared, by the examples he had been set, to brutalize the name even of civil warfare.

Nor have we yet described all the incentives to the wild outbreak of the Irish peasant in 1798.

Besides the illegal despotism adopted to put down the Defenders of 1795, numbers of them had been executed according to the usual process. Hence it appeared that Defenderism was deemed, by authority, near akin to high treason. The old Peep-o'-day-boys, as professed supporters of Government—boasting, indeed, we know not how truly, of its countenance—acted upon the hint. With freshened zeal and energy they re-opened the campaign against their fellow-countrymen. Now, anxious to profess their loyalty in the very telling of their name, they changed their original title into that of Orangemen—the appellation retained, to the present day, by them, or by their successors.

Having achieved, in a kind of pitched battle, a brilliant victory over the objects of their hate, they professed the intention of banishing from Ulster every professor of the odious creed. Upon the dwellings of such they posted the following notice,—"To hell or Connaught, you —— Papist! if you are not gone by —— (a specified day), we will come back and reckon with you; we hate all Papists here!" If the command was not obeyed, they kept their word; returned; burnt the house or cabin of the disobedient party; and compelled him and his family to fly. Thus were hundreds driven from their homes to spread, amongst millions of their own persuasion, at once, the story and the warning, of their individual suffering.

However unfounded might have been the boast of the Orangeman, that he acted under high authority, it remained uncontradicted, and the Southern as well as the Northern peasant took its truth for granted. In common, therefore, with the terror and abhorrence of their old persecutors, now felt by the lower classes of Catholics, arose a confirmed sentiment of hatred towards those who, it was believed, had set them on. Farther, it became credited that the Orange oath was a horrid covenant, horribly worded, to exterminate Catholics all over Ireland. The Government, which was supposed to countenance such an oath, as well as the detested party who were supposed to take it, stood forth as joint objects of the mad revenge, and of the frightful mode of conflict, (ere their final rising, again and again inculcated by Orangemen,) of the insurgent peasants of Leinster.

Many were the differences between the inauguration, upon the very eve of warfare, of the Catholic Republican of the South, and that of the original framers of the conspiracy in the North. Many were the differences between their views and feelings in the common struggle. But no difference between them is so remarkable, or so melancholy, as the fact that the effort, which had been planned in a spirit of sectarian unanimity, should thus change into a mere religious contest throughout the southern and western parts of Ireland. Previous to the insurrection, almost every Protestant, whether sworn or not, chose to be considered as an Orangeman. By skilful management, in able hands, the badge of that party became a necessary symbol of loyalty. Few of the established religion, therefore, from motives of choice or of prudence, as the case might be, appeared abroad without it. The Catholic peasant confounded all the late adherents of his abhorred enemies with the first and worst who had persecuted him: Protestant and Orangeman became, in his mind, synonymous words. And in this delusion he caught up his rude and formidable pike, when, without time being afforded him to reflect, he was precipitated, by United Irish emissaries on the one hand, and by monstrous and wanton outrage on the other, into the *mêlée* of civil strife.

CHAPTER II.

THE summer sun was slanting his evening rays over the picturesquely winding Slaney, and casting along the smooth greensward that sloped to its edge, the lengthened shadow of as fair a form as in his day's journey he had shone upon.

She stood looking pensively at the water, that with the curling breeze dimpled like her cheek;—that in its heaven of light and azure softly shone like her blue eyes. Not to admire the inverted landscape, softened by the translucent medium, or quivering into magic confusion before the faint wind, did she thus gaze. Remembrances, agitated, or touched with tenderness,—hope,—fear,—self-dissatisfaction;—all these might in turn be traced in her fair face. She at length threw herself on a little knoll, formed by the bulbing roots of a fine old ash-tree, and, still with her eyes fixed upon the water, abstractedly sat picking up scraps of crumbled

clay, and, as fair hands will do,—throwing them awkwardly into the water.

Young, beautiful,—indulged and happy under the paternal roof, and as noted for innocent vivacity as for her grace and loveliness,—what cause but *the* one could Eliza Hartley, the heiress of Hartley Court, have for such abstraction? Let us answer our own query, or ascertain its justice, by a glance at the thoughts that on this summer evening were chasing each other across her mind, their shadows at the same time floating over the sunshine of her looks.

"Do I indeed prefer this stranger?" she communed with herself. "If I do not yet prefer him, I fear—I may. And yet—Fear! Why should I fear?" A jump to another branch of the subject, which must be guessed at by the penetration of the reader. "But—but—it would be very nearly love at first sight. Am I so—could I indeed inspire *that?*—"

Doubtfully her eyes fell upon the water once more. In the natural mirror, now uncurled by a breeze, they beheld themselves witchingly laughing in answer: she looked again; they told her *was* charming, and—she believed them.

"But still"—here a shade of seriousness clouded her sparkling face, "may I not mistake my sentiments for this young man?" A half-remorseful sigh from the young damsel. "Did I not once—and very lately too—imagine that I preferred another? Ah! but I only *imagined* it then. It was only a—a childish—yes, a childish conceit. My feelings now convince me it was so." A deeper sigh, and a deeper cloud over the—alas! must we own it?—slightly coquettish face. "Poor Harry!—how will he feel it?—how happy we used to be together before *he* came. Poor Harry, poor Harry! But"—pouting—"must not I, too, suffer at the thought of having allowed you to suppose—though I am not to blame; I supposed so myself—that you had gained my heart when—when my regard for you was but that of friendship? Well, but after all, I never directly deceived him—did I? I am sure I never, by words at least, gave you any right to think your—your preference returned!

"And yet," the girl went on more thoughtfully, and shaking off all flippancy of look or idea, "here is but a poor extenuation, after all. Be honest, Eliza Hartley,—be honest, in this at least. Can you disguise from yourself that your general manner and conversation, the tones of your voice, the expression of your face must have often conveyed a degree of liking that you yourself believed to be—yes, Love!—and such as, working upon a generous, ardent

nature such as Harry Talbot's, may henceforth poison the happiness of his whole life? Alas! it is true, I cannot deny it. Poor, generous, true-hearted Harry Talbot!"

The eyes which a minute since had gazed so complacently in the water, were now dim with penitential tears. The pretty head which had, upon the witching assurance received, indulged in a girlish little toss, now drooped upon her bosom.

"I will write directly to my dear and high-minded friend Belinda," the now serious girl thought. "As she was from the outset aware of my childish affection for Harry—her clear judgment may give me some direction. If she would now realize her old promise of coming to see me! But no, no! I should now almost dread to encounter personally Belinda's lofty reasonings—whatever they may prove to be."

And Eliza continued to muse in the evening sunshine, and amidst the songs and flutterings of the little birds, for the first time in her life indifferent to the joy-giving presence of both.

Another person of her own sex had for some time sat unobserved at a little distance, not so insensible, though little of youth's smiling sympathy was in her heart, to the cheering sunbeam. This person relished the genial glow in something of the taste of the domestic cat, when, purring excessively, and with half-shut eyes, puss elevates her furry coat to admit the warmth of the winter fire.

As Eliza Hartley looked along the chequered verdure of the river path, she perceived that one stream of light was wanted, in a certain well-known spot. Glad of any interruption to her thoughts, she sprang up, and advancing, found that its usual passage was obstructed by the low burly person of Nanny the Knitter, who, sitting full in its way, monopolized to her round back the benefits of the ray that Nature had destined to a more general ministry, as, now stirring one shoulder, now another, her sensations acknowledged its pleasing influence.

She was intent upon the employment which bestowed her appellation of "The Knitter." In a pocket, especially constructed to hold it, was deposited her ball of worsted, that turned round and round therein, as the thread extending from it to her fingers became wrought, with almost magical art and celerity, into comfortable coverings for rustic feet and legs, of different conditions. Her fingers moved and twisted, and came in contact with each other, so flippantly as to baffle the eye in its endeavour to trace regular motion, during a ceaseless operation that was, nevertheless, inva-

riably regular. And, sitting or standing, or stumping along, for she was often afoot, this was Nanny's constant occupation.

To carry on her staple manufacture, she engaged in a considerable and varied traffic. Needles, threads, tape, and thimbles, and a variety of other little et-ceteras, she bartered with the rustic dames around for small portions of fleece;—nay, she travelled, at stated times, into the adjacent mountain district of Wicklow, to procure the finer wool of the small sheep. And all this she carded and spun with her own hands, and transformed into stockings, for which she found a ready market, "both," to use her own words, "among the common sort and the quality, all the same." Nanny's stockings were, indeed, of surpassing texture.

But although such was the employment from which she derived her surname and her regular means of existence, it was not the only agency by which Nanny filled the "weazel-skin purse with the yellow guineas." There *was* such a purse, the neighbours whispered, "the length of her knitting-needle, to receive her savings for her, and not to make them the worse of putting up." And under the head of "savings" may be comprised nearly all the money she in any way obtained; for eating and drinking cost her nothing; Nanny being always as a guest, from one farmer's house to another, or in the kitchens of more considerable persons. Upon the authority of a shopkeeper in the next town, the neighbours added that Nanny was in the habit of changing her copper into the smallest piece of silver; that into a larger one; and still, with the addition of more copper, or else by the junction of two minor pieces, from shillings she would create half-crowns, then crowns. Finally—to the wonder and envy of her friends—guineas themselves were acquired. Thus, although little acquainted with the sciences, Nanny discovered the Philosopher's stone, by the only process—although so different from the old theory—through which it will ever be attained.

An account of the collateral occupation, by virtue of which as well as by virtue of her kitting needles, those rapid changes went on, must not be omitted. At one and the same time, and at all times, with her handicraft business—for, wherever she was, and however employed in talking, her hands were never idle—Nanny followed the profession of a Mercury in love affairs. Not, indeed, with the dispatch of the celestial messenger, because she often contrived to prolong final terminations, in order still to hold the parties under contribution. Yet, if she was slower than upon similar occasions was the match-maker of the gods of old, never, like him, did she

undertake an illicit affair! Her embassies invariably had in view the uniting, in the bonds of wedlock, the youthful (sometimes the more reverend) folk around her.

And various were her commissions to this end. Fathers and mothers engaged her to inspect keenly the worldly substance of "the boy" or the girl they had in their eye for daughter or for son; and if matters appeared fit and proper, she would throw out hints sufficient to open a negociation. Shame-faced lads employed her to sound the feelings of the lasses they sighed for,—a task they might not themselves have ability to undertake. Still oftener, bashful or clever maidens, as the case might be, feed her to attempt similar discoveries. If a mother had a daughter whom it was advisable, no matter for what reason, to establish in the world, Nanny was consulted. And she was always ready to display an assortment of young men, as strictly in a mercantile point of view as the merchant when he exhibits his bales of goods. Nor was her stock of young women ever found less numerous or diversified. From her strictly proper views of things, mere love-matches, disproportioned in a worldly sense, as is almost uniformly the case, met no assistance from Nanny. She would indeed go so far towards the legitimate verge of her vocation, as to help a marriage, when competence, love, and a good disposition, sought alliance with superior wealth. But, out of regard to her character, she was never known to be a party to any very unequal unions.

In the way of business, Nanny the Knitter had taken certain steps, relative to the establishment of our heroine as the lady of Harry Talbot. In this instance, Harry's seeming amiability and liberal fees may be said to have engaged Nanny in one of the extreme cases of her professional practice.

Upon the present evening, however, as she sat in the sun at her work, the match-maker's mind was embarrassed on this very subject. It could not, even for a few hours, have escaped her eyes, or her ears at least, that the heiress of Hartley Court was likely to be addressed by a new suitor. Hence many serious questions arose. Would the new suitor be more acceptable than the old? Would he be more worthy of acceptance, in point of worldly fortune?—Would he employ her as often, and pay her as generously? Nanny could not venture to say, for as yet she had never seen Sir William Judkin.

"The bright evenin' to you, Miss Eliza, my honey! The blessins o' life an' health be in your path!" she said, with one of her customary duckings downward, having arisen as the young lady appeared.

"Good evening, Nanny;" returned the now smiling girl. "And how is Shaun-a-Gow's daughter?"—smiling still more gaily, at a recollection of the surveillance Nanny kept up over all the young women in the neighbourhood.

"May I never do an ill turn, Miss Eliza, my honey! but she's a comely, clane crature, an' good wid all that. Sprightly as a kittin, too, considherin' a counthry girl, like her. An' to tell nothin' bud the thruth, there *was* one spakin' to me about Kitty Gow. But," in a whisper, "I don't b'lieve it 'ill be. The father is a fraptious, cross-grained man; an' faix! I'm a'most afeard to meddle. I make a guess he won't let her have the body that wants her, thinkin' him not good enough. Good enough he *is* for Shaun-a-Gow's daughther, tho' only a sarvent boy."

"I wish well to pretty Kitty Gow, Nanny, and hope she may be happy in time, with her Father's consent—if, indeed," the young lady added with exemplary demureness, "her admirer be a young person of respectable conduct."

"Faix, my pet! you're a good judge o' that your ownself. You know him well. It's one Tim Reily, his honour your father's man."

"Indeed! I did not suppose Reily inclined or even fitted for the shackled state."

"Och! never mind Tim, Miss Eliza. He has the humoursome, pleasant way wid him, to be sure; but he's no great fool, into the bargain!"

"Well, well!" said Eliza, turning her thoughts from Kitty Gow and Tim Reily to herself and two other persons.

There was a pause in the dialogue. The Knitter bent forward a little, her short, thick person, and protruded her round face a degree or two from beneath the hood of her blue cloak, which, according to her invariable mode of costume, was drawn over her head, and surmounted by a masculine, foxy-coloured hat. In this position did she peer at the young lady, with her whitish eyes glimmering out of beds of flesh, formed partly by bare protuberances where there should have been eyebrows, partly by the heights of her plump cheeks. Eliza Hartley, once more immersed in her own affairs, seemed to have forgotten Nanny's presence, and so afforded, to her attentive observer, a good opportunity for study. From the inclination of her mouth to smile, and the half motion of the dimples of her cheeks, the Knitter first supposed that her thoughts were not of a disagreeable nature. But her features fterwards assumed a sombre cast, her pretty face was overclouded, id tears, even, sprang to her eyes, and wetted the long silken

lashes, that drooped, beaded with quivering drops, towards the blooming cheek.

Nanny saw the thoughts reflected from the ingenuous mind to the countenance she contemplated. She deemed it a good time to speak.

"So the ould sweetheart, poor Misther Talbot, as we hear, may go wid his courtin' to some other lady?" she remarked, in a whisper.

Eliza Hartley started, and to her fingers' ends blushed scarlet deep.

"Nanny," she said, rather haughtily, "you must never talk so to me."

"Poor young gentleman, the heart widin his body, will be broke."

"Nanny, have I not forbidden such freedom?" An accusing conscience stung her into temper, and, with a brow of displeasure, Eliza Hartley turned towards her home.

Nanny saw that she was nearly out of favour. The young lady marched along slowly and with dignity, and the old woman stumped after her.

"But the heart's liking must have its way;" she temporized, "an' quare would it be to say that Miss Eliza, the pet, that's great, an' rich, an' as comely as the May-day, shouldn't have her own pick-an'-choose, be him Lord, or be him Arl, or be him Juke, or the King of England on his throne, if it came to that!"

Still no answer. The offended fair one had gained a door leading through an orchard to her father's house.

"Miss Eliza, my honey dear, don't be vexed entirely wid your poor ould Nanny."

Eliza turned suddenly round: her face beamed on the apprehensive old woman the full amount of its usual good-nature and merriment.

"Where are you going, Nanny?"

"I'm goin', my honey! to look afther Shaun-a-Gow's daughther, Kitty."

"Well, then, good evening, Nanny. When you have attended to your business, come up to the Court, and the servants shall have orders to provide you with your supper and a bed."

"Och, may the blessins purshue you and be in your road, Miss Eliza, my honey!"

Miss Eliza smilingly bowed her head, and Nanny also performed her adieu. Not with any of that graceful inclination of person her

young patroness used: much more simply;—that is, by suddenly bending her knees until her short petticoats touched the ground, and then as suddenly rising and ducking again, while the lady remained in view, accompanying every curtsey, such as it was, with verbose ejaculations and prayers for her long life, health, happiness, and prosperity.

When they at length lost sight of each other, Nanny put on one of her gravest, most important, and most business-like faces, as she shook her head and reflected that a considerable source of occupation and profit seemed dried up. For she had succeeded—or thought she had succeeded—in persuading Mr. Harry Talbot, that she was all-powerful with Sir Thomas Hartley's beautiful heiress.

There had been a listener to the conversation between her and Eliza Hartley, as he was also a keen observer of their parting, or rather of the little quarrel that had preceded it. Conveniently for the purposes of an eaves-dropper, a grove of beautiful and varied foliage, enclosed by a hedge, rose immediately behind the large ash-tree, under which we first beheld our heroine, for such in reality she is to be. Close to the hedge, completely out of view, this young gentleman lay in ambush. His post was origially assumed that he might, at full leisure, watch the graceful motions of the fair girl, and at his ease admire her beauty, mellowed into a bewitching softness, by the cast of her thoughts on this evening. When Eliza joined Nanny, he was induced to prolong his concealment, in the hope that their discourse would turn upon himself. What he thought of Nanny's sympathy for a former and older lover, she and the reader will soon know.

The Knitter heard a bounding, elastic step behind her. Before she could turn her head, a sonorous, and not unmusical voice, accosted her.

"Whither in such haste, good dame?"

She turned, and at the first glance her sage eye knew her man; and further informed her, that Harry Talbot's case was a desperate one. The person she examined seemed to her good judgment the very finest young man she had ever beheld. And Nanny prided herself upon being a judge in such matters, and a judge whose decision no one need question. He was tall; formed in the haughty kind of beauty of the Belvidere Apollo; (Nanny did not make the comparison, but her homely ideas may bear this classic translation) his face a fine oval, with just as much red and white in it as became a man. His eyes were large, lustrous black; his clustering

hair, glossy as the raven's wing, was, according to the fashion of the time, worn long. His carriage, and the expression of his features, had the bold, dashing character which the fair reader will allow to be highly regarded by that sex whose opinion must give the law, in all such matters.

"Whither in such haste, my good dame?"

One moment's reflection was sufficient to inspire Nanny with the idea of how it behoved her to act under the circumstances.—"Only jest a little way, your honour, my honey!" she answered.

"That's a most lovely young lady you parted from just now!"

"Faix, an' it's no lie you're tellin', my honey. An' there's a pair o' ye wid the same fault."

"She seems very partial to you, Nanny;—is not that your name?"

"Annystachee the Soggarth put upon me, your honour, my pet, an' Nanny the neighbours calls me out o' frienship, an' by the way of being free wid me. An' faix, yes, Miss Eliza, the gra, is as free wid me too—the blessins pour down on her purty head!—as free as she'd be wid one o' the quality, afther a manner."

"Well, harkye, my old dame, you must be my friend with your charming young patroness. Hold out your hand—there is a guinea to get you tobacco, or whiskey, or knitting needles, or whatever you like; and more of the same kind of fruit grows on the same tree, you know!"

"The blessins—"

"Nonsense—keep your tongue quiet, and listen to me. Never, as long as you breathe or knit, mention to her again that young fellow—that Harry—what d' you call him—?"

"Square Harry Talbot, your honour, my honey!"

"Ay, the same. If I find you ever do, by all that's charming—meaning her,—and by all that's ugly—including yourself,—your round head shall be wrung off, and put in your pocket for a worsted-ball, to spin your stockings out of."

"Why, then, may I never do an ill turn, but Nanny washes her hands of him from this blessed moment out! Would there be any harum in axin you, my pet, if your ear was cocked near the river's side a little while agone?"

"Certainly I was there, long before you came up, or how could I know what passed between you?"

"Why then, mind my words, my gra. That I might'nt die in sin but you'll win the prize, as sure as I have my weddin'-stockins on me." ("Weddin'-stockins," in Nanny's phraseology, standing for bare-legs, Nanny's own legs being stockingless.)

"Win!—To be sure I shall. Let me see who dares cross me. Win!"

As he spoke, a confidence, perhaps the result as much of former success in less important affairs of the heart, as of his high opinion of his personal qualifications, mingled with the haughty expression of his tone and features.

"Why, then," her whitish eyes twinkling at the ardour of her new acquaintance, as would those of a tradesman viewing a rich sample of his goods,—"why, then, a merry Aesther to me but it's you I like, your honour, my pet. You have the *spudduch* * in you. An' if I was a fair lady to-morrow, it's such as you I'd have, that wouldn't be snakin' an' creepin', an'—"

"Well, I can't stop merely to chatter with you. Good bye; mind our terms. Be my friend, and expect some fellows to what you have got, and abundance of customers for your stockings, as soon as the beauty of the Slaney is mine. Be my enemy, or even prove indifferent to my hopes and interests, and never wind worsted, or knit stockings more."

"As sure as I'm a lump of a sinner, your honour, my honey, I'll do my endayvours, as pure out o' love an' likin, as for the sake o' the lucre."

But before she finished this speech of half mistatement and half truth, her new friend had bounded out of view, on his way to Hartley Court; and Nanny jogged on "to give a look after Shawn-a-Gow's daughther:"—her usual sturdy step, a certain swinging of her nether garments, and a corresponding motion in her shoulders, giving her the air of one who thought herself of some importance in the world.

CHAPTER III.

THE river Slaney, in its course through the county of Wexford, sports amid regions of beauty. Nothing, indeed, of the bold, the magnificent, or the terrific, fills with awe and wonder the mind of a spectator: Nature is there to be placidly contemplated in all her diversities of wood, of verdure, and of water,—such as we may well believe, tempted the old mail-clad Norman to desire the possession of a land of so much lovely promise.

* Spirit.

On either side of the river, the grounds rise and fall in every change of soft form. Demesne succeeds demesne; mansion is in view of mansion; some in the little vallies, some crowning the little eminences. And sloping fields of tenderest green, clustering woods, or scattered trees of beautiful growth, each casting its own single shadow across the silent meadow, present an ever-changing landscape, more soul-subduing, perhaps, than the more tremendous scenes of nature.

Sometimes, the dark wood clothes the quick descent, and seems stooping to bathe its branches in the water. Or the grassy hill rises quickly above the stream's edge, and the foliaged height is at a greater distance. Or the less abrupt mound slopes to the level sward, which, soft and elastic, and studded with bush or tree, stretches to the limpid wave, or here and there discloses itself but in patches between the frequent groves. Or the mysterious glen, with its dusky and shaded sides, conceals the course of some tributary rill.

The Slaney, we have said, appears to gambol through these ever-varying beauties. Clear and rapid, it rushes round the protruding point, bounds against the opposing hill, or in devious curves winds towards the occasional level. If ancient superstition were to give to a local deity the care and guidance of the erratic stream, he would be described as a youthful divinity of mixed gentleness and sportiveness, now frolicking along the margin of his river, now gently reclining on her banks, and in every change of mood fascinated with his situation.

In this sketch, we particularly have in view the banks of the Slaney before its near approach to the sea. Further on it becomes more expanded, assumes a more sober and important character, and its attendant fascinations are more stately and less frequent.

Such as has been described was the scenery around Hartley Court, the seat of our heroine's father. And amid all the mansions that looked down on the river, or contributed their lawns or groves to the charms of the general landscape, that of Sir Thomas Hartley was peculiarly distinguished by a venerable character of age and importance.

The house stood on the west bank of the Slaney; in what particular spot, it is not, for sufficiently good reasons, convenient to point out. Its ample front faced the public road between Enniscorthy and Newtownbarry, or more anciently, Bunclody. At the rear its windows overlooked the river, of which the banks sloped up no more than the distance of a few paces, to the boundary of

the edifice. A lawn of velvet turf extended from the front to the road, guarded by a low wall, which at the spot exactly opposite the hall-door, scarcely reached above the knee of the passenger, so that he might stop to admire the mansion, and from it be observed to pay his tribute of admiration. A few old pear-trees planted by the hands of yore, still sheeted with white blossoms in the spring, and bending with mellow fruit in the autumn, two hawthorns of surpassing growth, that perfumed the air in May, and some half dozen of umbrageous chestnuts and sycamores, gave a chequered shadow to the lawn's bright green.

From the right side of the house, a straight row of ancient limes swept to the avenue gate. At the left, a corresponding row sheltered the garden, separated from the lawn only by a hedge, against the northern blast. Again to the right, beyond the avenue, a grove ran to the Slaney, adown a sloping hill. The garden, at the opposite side, was entered by a little gateway: over it was a hanging orchard, whence, by a private door, the river's edge might also be gained. And here, two straight lines of beech formed, for a little distance, a shady walk by the water. Farther on, arose the plantation within which the listener lately lay concealed. Outside the bounding hedge-row of which was the old ash-tree, that coiled up its roots to supply a seat to the musing girl he had taken up his position to watch.

The house, it has been said, was unique of structure. At either end of its front, stood two square masses of building, perhaps once intended to represent flanking towers. But at present, instead of loop-holes, through which to annoy an approaching enemy, three stories of large windows adorned them. A grove of slender chimney-tops farther indicated that those towers, if they may so be termed, now served for other uses than that of warlike defence. The front that connected them was broad, and also full of windows: it terminated above in a flagged parapet, over which peeped the sharp-pointed roof. The whole building was of a venerable greyish hue, in fine contrast with the ancient, gnarled ivy that rioted over the walls and about the lower casements.

Advancing midway towards the house, you discovered in the lawn, elevated upon a massive pedestal, a surly-looking heathen deity: the windows of the mansion also allowed his godship to be contemplated by such of the inmates as were inclined to discuss the question of his identity, or who might have a relish for the Fine Arts. Arrived at length at the house, another figure, more obviously a hero in Roman costume, regarded you, leaning upon his

spear, from his niche over the hall door. It would have been difficult to decide upon the classic name of either, inasmuch as the proprietor of Hartley Court could not, himself, venture to determine the point.

We acknowledge an almost garrulous inclination to continue a picture of the old edifice:—who can say what peculiar recollections and association of our's may cling, like the twining ivy, to its venerable walls? The reader may therefore accompany us past the entrance-door, low and heavy, and altogether out of proportion with the mansion,—into the spacious hall, paved with black and white marble, where he will be faced by the broad oak-stairs, inclosed by its ponderous and highly-carved balustrades, and whence, at either hand, pannelled doors leading to different apartments or passages, also shine in the dark splendour of old oak, and that oak old Irish.

Indeed, almost all the timber-work within view was of the old oak of the neighbourhood. Of this, extensive forests had, in times gone by, spread over the county of Wexford, and into the neighbouring county of Wicklow, where the wood of Shillela, perhaps the only remnant of these primeval plantations, yet stands to afford, (as, from something of national pride, we trust every body knows,) to the generous sons of green Ireland, native weapons of peculiar excellence in combat.

As the massive hall-door is closed after him—not lightly banged to, with the velocity of the smart porter of our day, or even of the day then in being, but requiring some time and effort to be toilsomely moved round on its hinges—the reader may proceed with us up the staircase, leaning his hand, if he be tired with his ramble abroad, upon the massive carved balustrade. Having gained the venerably shadowed landing-place, we propose, without waiting the formality of an announcement, to usher him through a door to his right, which he will perceive to be also surrounded with rich carving. And provided he promise to give no disturbance, nor to make his presence irksome by any unreasonable interference, we shall place him in a comfortable arm-chair, at one side, where he can look on and decorously attend to what passes.

The apartment is elegantly furnished in the modern style—that is, the modern style of the period of our tale. In a window-recess, so deep as almost to hide her from our view, but that the slanting evening beam shoots in to illumine her person, sits Eliza Hartley. Her walking-dress is doffed, and she holds a book in her hand. But that hand lies listlessly upon her knee, and the book is closed, except that one finger remains between the leaves, while its rose-

tipped and taper companions spread over the cover. Her head leans towards her left shoulder; her blooming cheek is indented by the forefinger of her disengaged hand, while the next finger to that presses up her under-lip into a discontented but charming pout, and the others bend gracefully towards the palm. Thus presenting that pretty contact between cheek and hand, which inspired the love-lorn Romeo with his celebrated wish.

Her eyes are cast down, and seem to be intently contemplating her dainty little foot. Through her whole position there is a play of the curving line, so much esteemed by artists, and rendered fascinating to any observer, provided we suppose him young, by embracing, in its progress through the figure, those tender undulations that characterize maiden beauty. The golden sun lights up into warm glow her softly blooming cheek, and, shining through her wavy hair, produces that vivid effect of transparent colour which we see in shrubs, trees, and flowers, when, at morning or evening, he shines through them to us. A little to one side, towards a window farther from the door than that occupied by Eliza Hartley, sits another lady.

She is employed in (we believe) embroidery, or light fancy needlework of some kind. She wears a well-stiffened cap, formidably high in front. Tiny as are the waists of ladies, even at the present period, this second person to be noticed, has a waist of even less circumference, and of a length that would make one almost suppose she had been spun out to increase her height. Below this stretch of waist, the lady increases so suddenly, and to so curious an extent, that, if the half of her figure above conveyed a notion of lankness, this gives a contrary and incongruous expression of fulness. Such an abrupt variety in the construction of two adjacent portions of the same person, caused us for some time to wonder at the whims of Nature, until, having consulted a lady-relative of the last century, we learned that art had most to do with the previously unaccountable disagreement. That, in fact, the cylinder waist had been formed by the powerful pressure of whalebone, and that semi-circular pieces of the same material, (the idea taken, no doubt, from Cupid's bow,) fastened under the drapery, gave the second monstrous* appearance. This great breadth of drapery continued to the floor; and from beneath a stiff and rustling tabinet appeared just the very tips of two feet, or rather the sharp points of two embroi-

* Of course, only "Monstrous," according to the rude ideas of the day in which this tale was written. The edicts of the fair sex have anew ordained that such arrangement of drapery shall be deemed "charming." We bow, and make our apology for the errors of our youth.

dered silk shoes, propped at the heels upon three inches of wood, all in the style of forty years before.

"Dear niece," said this lady, after a long silence had ensued between her and Eliza, "the tender preference is, believe me, mutual. I could not be deceived in the nature of Sir William's attentions. For, though many, many years have elapsed since my ever-to-be-remembered loss, still I do not forget that exactly as your amiable admirer looks and acts in your presence, so, in mine, did the dear unhappy youth, now no more."

"Absurd, my dear aunt, with your pardon," interrupted Eliza, getting tired of allusions she had heard from infancy, rather than of the former allusions which they would illustrate,—"absurd, my dear aunt, to attribute such sentiments either to me or to Sir William."

"Well, well, child! I but sought, I am sure, to alleviate the soft doubts and fears of your bosom, which escape every moment in those long-drawn sighs."

"*I* sigh, aunt!—nay, you only listen to the echoes of your own customary respirations." For, after every recurrence to the unfortunate termination of her early love, Miss Alicia Hartley was, indeed, in the habit of uttering what she believed to be a very rueful inhaling and exhaling of the breath.

"Is that so very, very true, my love?" whispered Eliza's Father at her ear. He had softly entered the room, and stood behind her chair unobserved by our heroine, during her meditative mood. He remained secured from Miss Alicia's notice also, by the deep recess of the window.

"What, Sir? is what true? Tell me the difference, pray, between true, very true, and very, very true." Her serious mood now suddenly passed away, or Eliza easily succeeded in shaking it off, and she turned up her head to address her father in the sportive manner that was usual with her.

"Eliza, I would speak seriously to you."

"Seriously, papa?" her small voice tinkling with the effect of a merry cadence of music; while she assumed a childish face of mock gravity, and looked full into her father's eyes, whose pleased and fond smile readily responded to her graceful fooling.

"Fie, now Sir. Seriously, you say,—and yet, see how you begin!"

"Dear child, I believe you could make me smile in——

"In the next fit of the gout, Sir?"

"No—I do not say as much"—recollecting, indeed, that Eliza's

spells used, hitherto, to have but little effect, on such occasions—"No; but in more serious misfortune."

"Could I, dear papa?"—and she sprang forward, and threw her soft arms round his neck,—"Well! nothing can ever make your Eliza so happy as to hear you say so!"

"Nothing, my child?"

"No, indeed, Sir."

"Have a care, Eliza. I know you now speak of quiet, easy happiness, that soothes, without agitating, a young heart."

"Oh, indeed, indeed, I do."—and she softly patted his hand with hers.

"But is there no happiness above this, or differing from it, of which you form a notion, or have a wish for? A happiness," he went on, half-playfully, "that sets the heart vibrating to the sound of a voice, or glowing to a look—that sends little pleasing flutters through every fibre, and sometimes breathes out little airy hopes, that know not well what they hope? Tell me truly, Eliza, have you no notion of any happiness like this?"

"Let me see, Sir. It is a difficult question—to say little of its being a long one—and requires a close and cautious analysis. I must have time to take it asunder; examine each part separately; then put it together again, study the odd compound as a whole, and finally make up my mind for an answer."

"I will simplify the case. Do you know what it is to love, Eliza?"

"Yes, to be sure, a great many things; but what, papa?"

"Suppose—Harry Talbot!"

"Very much indeed."

"Do you love another better?"

"Oh, a great deal."

"Who?"

"I love yourself, my dearest Father, a thousand times better."

"I thought so."

"And are you angry at it, Sir?"

"Come, Eliza—To be, as I said, serious"—

"Yes, Sir;—to be serious."

"Not with that silly face, child."

"Nay—Now you are vexed, in earnest."

"No, Miss Hartley; but may be."

"But you shan't"—her eyes laughing into his; "and what would you say, if Eliza really—really vexed you?"

"I do not know; the occasion would suggest its proportionate

severity. But I am not practised in severity, dear child; hitherto, you have not given me opportunity to be so."

"And that is all because my own dear Father is too good, too indulgent to his giddy daughter."

From this specimen of question and answer, may be gathered an idea of our heroine's tolerable skill in playing with a topic which she did not wish to meet. It may further indicate how, upon, as Sir William Judkin thought, many propitious occasions, she was able to foil her lover's attempts to ascertain, by her manner of replying to his declaration, the favourable opinion in his regard, which, indeed, for the last two months, needed the expression of words only.

"I fear you are right, Eliza," resumed Sir Thomas, replying to her last little speech; "but, for the next few minutes at least, I am determined to play the tyrant with you. Here you stand, secured, at my side, and hence you shall not stir until I receive a rational answer to the question I have asked. Nor is it put idly, nor for the purpose of learning a secret. Consider, my child, that I have a father's feelings and fears upon this subject. You have been to me a very precious treasure; the light and pride of my house, and, God knows, the only consolation of an early widowed heart."

"Father," said Eliza, while his glistening eyes made her own tearful, "I will now answer your question seriously. But, Sir, not before your face." Smiles again broke through her tears, as, with both hands pressed against his face, she gently turned away his head. "I do, father"—blushes clothed her face, neck, and forehead, and her voice sank into a whisper—"I fear—I am almost sure—I do love!"

Sir Thomas was silent for a moment; and the air of solemn concern which took possession of his brow did not escape the sidelong look of Eliza. After a painful pause, he drew a sigh, and spoke on.

"I thank my child for her candour. But, in equal candour, it is my duty to say, that I regret the avowal. Long ago I hoped your heart had been given to another; and that other, Eliza, commanded my good opinion. I had attentively observed him, while he grew from boy into man; and I believed him capable of making my only child as happy as she deserves to be."

"Dearest Father"—sobbed Eliza, once more falling on his neck, "I should not—indeed, I should not—have formed this preference without your approval. But—but you were away in Dublin at first, Sir,—and—but no matter. I will try—let the trial cost me

what it may—I will now try, dear Father, to like Harry Talbot better since you wish it. But oh!—I do not think I can *now*."

"No, my good child," Sir Thomas said, suppressing a smile at this speech, "God forbid I should, in its first youth, cause that bosom to ache which never gave mine a throb but one of pleasure. I am no tyrannical father. At my years, the nature of the human breast, while it is not a mystery, should be a warning against despotic measures. Let me proceed. I now am anxious to say, that I can name no serious or particular objection to the young gentleman towards whom you entertain such favourable feelings. I should only wish to know him a little better, before I formally recognise him as my son. I had fixed my mind upon the other person alluded to at first, because I thought your own inclined that way. It was a mistake of course—"

"Oh, Sir!" interrupted Eliza, her conscience and high-mindedness prompting her to avow that it had not been quite a mistake. But her confusion really deprived her of the power of further utterance.

"Do not distress yourself, my child. Do not try to speak. Let us for the present, end this. You will have my blessing on your love, Eliza; and I feel confident that no man can so far forget himself, as ever to give you pain, or do your peace an injury. There, my child,—this moment, I ask God to bless your young choice—I ask the boon in a father's fondest anxiety—may it be granted!"

He slowly kissed her fair forehead, tenderly placed her in the chair he had just left, and walked out of the room,—his eyes moist with tears, such as

——"Pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head."

For some time, Eliza remained motionless in the seat in which her father had placed her; many delicious feelings, and a few disagreeable ones, keeping her cheeks moistened.

Could there be, indeed, any thing hidden from her partial eye, in Sir William's character, which her father had observed, or heard of? She bent her mind to scrutinize him, from recollection, very closely, and, as she resolved, without a shade of prejudice. His person was faultless; that point was easily disposed of. His birth, his education, were unexceptionable; these points too. His manners were polished—brilliant—no common observer could deny the fact. A little gay, indeed, like her own; if he was objected to on such an account, so must she be. His tastes, his feelings, his opinions,

his every mode of thinking, also coincided with her's. Again, if, upon any of these heads, Sir William's character had been deemed defective, her's was equally so.

Upon what, then, in the name of consistency, was founded her Father's dislike? But her Father had merely preferred another person, because with that other he had been better acquainted. He had not even found fault. Away, then, with every doubt of her lover!

She had been wise, however, in hitherto avoiding to afford Sir William an opportunity for a declaration. And she would still avoid doing so; so much was due to her Father. But Eliza contemplated no new transfer of her affections: that was impossible! It was very unfortunate her dear Father did not warmly approve. He had said as much as that he wished time to observe her lover. Well; she would allow him full time. And if her discernment of personal merit was not very much at fault indeed, Sir William would bear the scrutiny, and rise triumphant from it.

And thus, without much cause for grieving, after all, Eliza's path seemed smooth before her. Yet her heart *would* be sad. What was the hour?—Surely, *his* hour—and hark! The massive knocker of the hall-door pealed, indeed, Sir William's well-known challenge for admission.

In a few seconds afterwards, the Baronet advanced into the room with a free and graceful carriage, totally different as was also the expression of his glance and the tone of his voice, while he murmured his evening salutations to both ladies—from a certain dryness, hardness, and even swagger of manner, which had marked his late interview with Nanny the Knitter, and which had, perhaps, only been put on for the purpose of the moment. An air of laughing boldness now pervaded his fine figure, played around his handsome mouth, sparkled in his eye, and was emblazoned by the healthy, but not effeminate bloom of his countenance. The expression we would try to convey is indicated, if not fully given by the French term *enjoué*, applied to such a mixture of pleasant-seeming youthfulness and manly dash as pervaded the person and features of Sir William. Among the people from whom the word is borrowed, it is a frequent characteristic. After them, is perhaps oftener and more similarly exhibited by the Irish gentleman, than by individuals of any other country with which we are acquainted.

But natural conformation of character is here meant, rather than its ingenious assumption: the one being as amiable as it is prepossessing; while the other, even where it is so aptly affected as

not to prove disagreeable, is often but the result of daring habits of libertinism. In the world, however, little distinction is made between the two: even to severe eyes they will occasionally be confounded with each other; and we do not arrogate a sufficient degree of discrimination, to be able to say whether or not Sir William Judkin inherited the natural grace, or judiciously displayed the assumed accomplishment. To our casual observation, his *enjoué* air and manner appeared to sit easily upon him; Eliza Hartley is of the same opinion; and no farther does it seem necessary to put the question.

Miss Alice rose up to receive him; all the placid good-nature of her inward character beaming from her face, and blending with her old-fashioned dignity of mien. In truth, her return to the young Baronet's salute was equally compounded of kindness and stiffness, elegance and absurdity.

The meeting between him and his mistress was not so formal; though, indeed, his reverential bow might be taken as one of devotion, rather than of mere admiration, towards the divinity of the sanctuary window-recess. But Eliza did not answer it farther than by a slight bend of the neck, and a sweet though tempered smile; proclaiming at once her consciousness and pride of power, her sense of sufficient condescension conferred, and (to us, who have overheard her late discourse with her father,) her refreshed resolve to hold her slave, for some time longer, at a certain distance.

Owing to the motive for the last-mentioned expression of manner, Sir William, though he had this evening approached Hartley Court with manful resolution to possess himself of a certain acknowledgment, yet, when the hour came for offering his good-night, found not only that he had failed in carrying his determinations into effect, but that, in consequence of too bold an attempt to do so, he stood a few steps further from success than he had done upon entering the room. And here we deem it a proper time to supply a further account of the young and handsome wooer.

He was the sister's son of a lately deceased old Baronet, whose estate he arrived to inherit, and which joined that of Sir Thomas Hartley. His mother had made a love-match with a young English ensign, whom she met at a race-ball, or some such place, and had become rejected in consequence by her high, aristocratic family. She was entitled, however, by her mother's marriage settlement, to a considerable portion; and with this to aid the slender income of his pay—his only resource—she cheerfully followed the fortunes of the husband of her choice.

He embarked with his regiment for the American war, and was killed at the celebrated battle of Bunker's Hill, leaving to his young widow, as his only legacy, a son and daughter. She was, however, a thrifty lady; and, returning to her native country, settled in the metropolis, where, upon the income of her dowry, about three hundred pounds per annum, she diligently set about the education of her children. The girl died in infancy, and her entire care and affection became centred in her son.

Her mother was not alive at the time of her marriage, and, shortly after, her father also died. She had then remaining to her, of family connections in Ireland, but a brother and a sister: the former inheriting his father's title and estate, and, along with both, his father's high-blooded antipathy to his imprudent sister; the latter, an amiable young lady of twenty-five, not regarding her sister's early error in a light so heinous as to cause her to forget all sisterly solicitude, or quite to forswear all sisterly affection.

Since the battle of the Boyne, when the first Baronet, notwithstanding the princely notions of the family, gained his title and broad lands, all the Pierts had been eminent fox-hunters: some of them hearty ones; some of them morose; and of the latter class was the abhorring brother of this lady. As selfish as riotous in his enjoyments, as careless about the elegancies or the comforts of home, he married to increase his means for half-savage gratifications, and then treated his wife with less consideration than his horses. So that his sister, finding his huge, noisy, waste house unfitted to her tastes, and altogether unpleasant to reside in, quitted it and settled with the mother of the present Sir William Judkin. This step, while it augmented his aversion to the latter, brought the fugitive also under his ban. And his rancour became irremovably confirmed towards the living interests of the one, and the memory of the other, when Miss Piert dying, bequeathed her portion, equal to that of her elder sister, away from him, and to the detested widow, just at the very time when he began to stand in need of some such windfall from the tree of fortune.

No children followed his alliance with his ill-fated lady. Thus deprived of the mother's interest to console her for the husband's continued brutality, she demanded a separation. It was granted in a fit of high passion; and she retired amongst her own friends, to live more quietly on her well-secured settlement.

Now he kept a kind of Bachelor's Hall, and drank and hunted quite independently. Until one fine sporting day, as trying to clear a treacherous fence, he came in sight of a death, his hitherto fault-

less horse "toed," and fell under him, and the hunter's triumphant shout of jollity proved, indeed, a death-halloo for another besides the hopeless Reynard; who, it is said, amidst his agonies, grinned at the sudden fate of the greatest enemy his race had ever known. A thing not absolutely impossible, taking into account that he was a middle-aged and thrice-hunted fox, and further remembering the many wonderful stories of cunning sagacity which, since our earliest childhood, have illustrated to us the fox's attributes.

Although reckoning, perhaps, on some such leap out of the world as we have just seen him take, the old Baronet was never known to express much abhorrence of the unavoidable succession of his nephew, William Judkin. But he might have thought words superfluous on the subject, when he had inwardly resolved, that, provided he happened to hunt long enough for the purpose, there should be little for him to succeed to. And, indeed, though thus suddenly curbed in the ultimate realization of his plan, he had so far arranged, as to leave to his young heir an estate much encumbered. And this leads us to debate or surmise a few questions.

After finding himself only a few days in possession of not much more than a nominal fortune, might not Sir William, young and ardent though he was, have acknowledged to himself, how opportunely the unincumbered estate of the heiress of Hartley Court, together with a good sum of ready money, and a better one in expectancy from the sentimental Miss Alice, would serve to bring out of bondage many an acre that his uncle had placed therein? And if, upon the night following his unsuccessful visit, the fair sighing young lady thought for hours; and, when she was tired of thinking, only closed her eyes to dream, until the beams of the morning sun startled her from her visions, of pure, unalloyed, and disinterested love,—did the gallant Sir William, as he also consulted his pillow, feel the arrow less deep within his breast, because it was barbed with gold?

Let Time, the truth-teller, answer our queries.

CHAPTER IV.

In the gay month of June our story opened. The reader will now please to suppose, that three moons have successively shone out and become dark again; that the trees have assumed the varied

autumnal livery which painters so much admire; and the harvest been gathered home from the fields, and piled in large, well-constructed stacks in the "haggart." The last fruits of the year, too, somewhat roughly shaken by the more gusty blast, strew the orchard overnight, and remind the owner that it is time to think of stripping his trees of their remaining burden. The birds wholly give up the tutelage of their young: and parents and children assuming their gregarious instinct, mix on terms of equality. The sun does not shine with summer's heat; yet his beam is cheering, and less oppressive. And if the reader be of similar taste with Eliza and her lover, he will find this a very delightful season for gentle exercise afoot. Nature has put on such a happy variety of verdure, the fresh breeze blows so pleasantly against the forehead, making every little exertion an act of enjoyment, and tempting forth from the shady covert, to excursions more at large and more independent. In the estimation of our young friends, indeed, old Time seems to forget his hour-glass, and notes not the dribbling of its sand. His ever-moving wings, that sometimes flap with tempest-noise, or bear him on with lightning speed, only glide by them in silken motion, almost unheard and unnoticed, while he ministers to love and youth and beauty.

In truth, the summer went, and the autumn came, unheeded. During the happy interval, many interesting rambles, and much covert play of mutual attachment, might be detailed and portrayed for the reader, did not a reasonable caution preside over our pen. If, by our descriptions, we fully succeeded in presenting to some sighing fair, or pensive youth, the most charming pictures of her or his own experiences; we, at the same time, might fatigue our more sober friend, who, now that he can no longer relish Love's bright illusions and "young dream," thinks all such occupations but so much waste of the precious time, and of a valuable existence. The matter shall then be compromised between both. The gentle reader, or the true lover of the other sex, may recollect all the little symptoms, and the many slight, but, to the interested eye, confirming proofs, by which either was able, previous to actual declaration, to ascertain the state of the heart, sought to be subjected to despotic rule. And thus, while an opportunity occurs for pleasing retrospect of the happiest period of existence, a true though general sketch of the proceedings of Eliza and her admirer, cannot fail to be brought before the mind of him or her. As to our cynical patron, he need not trouble himself with any such cogitation;

and therefore, as concerns him, we disclaim all intention of lightly occupying this paper.

In the foregoing instance, something like an admission seems to be made that, with three months passed over their heads, Eliza Hartley and Sir William Judkin are still only observing each other. That, in fact, they have not arrived at an explicit understanding. True. And it is farther admitted that the fault still is Eliza's. With an adroitness, not marked by the straightforward simplicity which authors prefer in their heroines, she still chooses to defeat her lover in his attempts at a declaration. Her father has long ago assured her that his doubts are cleared up. Such is still her choice, why, we are not quite prepared to state. Perhaps, having, with her aunt's assistance, ascertained the greatness of her power—a discovery within her own capacity to make, were her aunt out of the question—she was not precipitate in exhibiting her own feelings. Or, perhaps, mixed with her deference to Miss Alice's notions of decorum in affairs of the heart, she wished to insure the durability of her lover's chains, by daily adding to them a new link. Or, less to her credit, Eliza might have tyrannically taken pleasure in witnessing the vassalage to which she had reduced one who was a slave worthy of her bondage.

Did there sometimes flit over the sunshine of her mind, the shade of a doubt—light as the thin-spun vapour, that, now and then, will pass across the most cloudless summer sky? In the midst of all her love, admiration, and confidence, was there, or did Eliza half-fancy there was, some little point of her lover's character not yet perfectly understood by her?

Had the recollection of Harry Talbot any thing to do with her seemingly playful hesitation? In the privacy of her chamber, after a morning, day, and night of undimmed happiness and vivacity, a thought of him would still certainly awaken grief and remorse, and, in spite of her, dread.

Eliza's opinion of herself did not allow her to suppose that she had over-rated the strength and intensity of the attachment of her former lover. Such an attachment, so long and so deeply rooted, he would not easily abandon. When called on to do so, Eliza feared she knew not what of startling consequence. For, although placid as the dove in her presence, Harry, she could learn, had once or twice, under peculiar causes of irritation, displayed a determination and sternness of character that she shuddered at the thought of seeing again called forth. Did she then vaguely temporize when pressed by visitations of this fear? Or, would she at least post-

pone the avowal of estranged affection which Sir William's declaration, if permitted, must produce, until Harry's re appearance at Hartley Court, when, admitting the state of her feelings, she might soothe him by truly asserting that his rival was not yet triumphant.

Another thing. Her friend, Belinda St. John, had not anwered her letter descriptive of her acquaintance with Sir William,—half-avowing her love for him,—hinting at her anxiety with regard to the luckless Harry Talbot,—and begging for advice and guidance in the matter. And might not the apprehension that this much-regarded friend was indignant at her transfer of affection, and hostile to the pretensions of a new lover, help to make her pause and coquette?—as, alas! we, as candid narrators, must admit she did.

A description here of one who had attained over the rather volatile Eliza so complete an ascendancy, will not be amiss.

Even when a girl, at school with Eliza, Belinda St. John had been remarkable for her pensive and somewhat morbid character. Quiet and reserved, she displayed none of the childish light-heartedness that sent her class-mates skipping about in glee when the study-hour was over, or the visit of the dancing-master at hand. Yet, under all this gravity or thoughtlessness of exterior, a singular fervour of temperament lived. Nature had endowed the young girl with susceptibilites quick as she was outwardly quiet; passions strong in proportion to the depth at which they lurked beneath the surface.

When she and Eliza, as young girls will, interchanged ideas regarding the important subject of Love and Lovers,—aspirations that on the one side, that of our heroine, were but lip-language, or at most, silly romance,—were sincere, serious, and passionate outpourings from the heart of Belinda. The one fancied what she said. The other felt it. The one childishly wished for a lover, that she might convince herself whether or not their grand theory of deathless devotion was to be reduced to practice. The other knew that in her own person at least it would be so.

Indeed, this close intimacy with Belinda—(the only intimacy permitted by that singular young lady)—may truly be said to have taught Eliza all her early romance, and, consequently, to have entailed upon her some of her present difficulties.

Nor was it upon this topic only that, from their first acquaintance, Eliza had deferred to the opinions of her friend, or imbibed ideas from her. Belinda's strength of mind and deep tone of feeling had gained over her a predominance that was, perhaps, as

unconsciously exercised as admitted. The very fact of selecting Eliza as the object of her undivided affection, while to all other girls of the school Belinda was cold, distant, and lofty, seemed to patronize at the same time that it flattered and delighted. It impressed Eliza, unknown to herself, with that sense of obligation which puts out of the question a consciousness of equality.

If Belinda were unusually serious or abstracted, her lively friend would curb her giddiest moods. If Belinda's grave, but singularly beautiful smile, met her, she would redouble her efforts to please. If Belinda looked cold, she took it more to heart than the darkest frown of the Schoolmistress herself. In a word, Eliza acquired the habit of not forming an opinion, without submitting it to the judgment of her friend.

Hence, it would seem but natural to suppose that Belinda's delay in answering the letter above-mentioned, might have influenced the part we have seen our heroine acting with her lover. Doubtless, the friend to whose judgment she had hitherto always deferred, was silent because she disapproved of the degree of fickleness displayed in the rapid transfer of her affections from one lover to another.

She was about to write a second letter, when she received, at last, a brief answer to her first. Belinda St. John had given a promise, as old as the period of their separation at school, to make Eliza a visit. This note intimated that she was at length able to realize her promise, and would, the evening after its arrival, present herself, by means of the public coach, at the avenue-gate of Hartley Court.

"The public Coach!" wondered Eliza. Then, for the first time in her life, she began to ask herself what were the social rank and connections of Belinda St. John. A young lady of condition need not adopt such a mode of travelling. She had said nothing about coming protected or attended. Was it possible that she would come without even an attendant?

Nothing, or very little, did Belinda's brief note say in reference to her friend's confidences: this omission soon gave birth to questions that absorbed all other considerations. A postscript merely mentioned that the writer would speak, when they met, upon the important subject Eliza had communicated to her. Eliza, much as she loved and looked up to her friend, felt hurt by this cold reference to her impulsive and frank outpourings. What could mean, after months of silence, this evasive allusion to the matter upon

which she had besought immediate and full counsel? First and last, the tone of Belinda's note seemed severe and moody. Eliza, almost childish in her vivacity and impulsiveness, felt chilled at the promised advent of one who threatened to prove a harsh monitor. Each hour that brought her nearer to the time fixed for her arrival but served to increase this feeling. The evening came, and as its shades fell, lower and heavier sank the shadow that had crept over her spirits.

The lawn was steeped in alternate moonlight and deep gloom, when the coach stopped at the avenue gate, where a servant of the house had been posted to give notice of its coming, and to wait upon the expected guest. Punctual to appointment, Belinda St. John stept out. Sir Thomas Hartley had not yet returned home from some place of county business; but Eliza, who had been lingering for the last half hour under the trees of the avenue, darted onward to receive and welcome her friend. A glance assured her that Belinda *had* come alone and unattended.

Belinda had advanced a little way up the avenue before she was met by her young hostess. Her stately, almost masculine port, as her tall, unbending figure alternately caught the moonlight, or was plunged in the shadows cast by the trees, struck Eliza as being very different from the elastic, though proud air which in their school days had distinguished her. As the two girls drew nearer, Eliza started, and could scarce restrain an exclamation of shocked surprise at the still more remarkable changes that had taken place in the familiar face.

When, in the fresh blossom of youthful charms, they had bidden each other farewell, Belinda, though in a style very different from her sunny-looking friend, had been perhaps more beautiful. Her cheek, pale when contrasted with Eliza's peachy bloom, was not without a delicate colour; her face was a fine oval; her brow smooth and broad; her eye-brows clear and straight; her lips, though rather full, were of a vivid red, and faultlessly carved;—her black eye, though often flashing, was usually gentle. But now her cheek was marble white, and wasted; her delicate brows contracted and drooping; her lips bloodless and so compressed as to look thin;—while in her eye there burned a lurid fire, that was disagreeable, if not sinister.

The girls met. Notwithstanding her momentary shrinking, the impulse of former friendship impelled Eliza to clasp her friend in her embrace: Belinda was grave and unimpassioned. The young hostess shrank, chilled anew, from the cold touch of the spare arms

that were lightly cast around her;—she was deeply wounded when Belinda, avoiding her warm kiss, bent down her wan cheek to meet her lips. Belinda's voice, once musical and tender, fell upon her ear with a harsh, metallic clang. None of the old, well-remembered cadences now modulated it.

The first greeting over, they stood for some moments, hand in hand, looking in silence into each other's faces, Belinda's dark eyes softened into melancholy, her lips relaxed into something like emotion,—Eliza's not devoid of the expression of fear, almost of mistrust. So strangely, indeed, was she impressed by the apparent alterations of features, manner, character even, that she only dared to whisper to herself:—"How changed she is!—My God!—What a change!"

Becoming aware, doubtless, of this feeling, the visitor herself was the first to lead the way towards the house. She was, perhaps, hurt thereat, for she dropped Eliza's hand and walked along in silence. Eliza felt as though under some nightmare influence. Scarce daring to glance at the stately figure of the visitor, who paced so gravely beside her, sensations akin to terror took possession of her—sensations partaking even of the character of the supernatural. She hurried forward in nervous haste, and peered right and left amid the ghostly moonlight flecked with shadows. She almost felt as though the person beside her was but a mocking likeness of her former friend.

But, ere they gained the house, Belinda, somewhat to her relief, somewhat to her apprehension, again addressed her. How harsh and unmusical the changed voice!—

"So, Eliza, you no longer wonder if there be such a thing as deep, devoted love?"

Eliza was relieved, yet she shrank from the subject.

"I fear, dear Belinda,"—she began in a whisper. Belinda, speaking with smothered passion, interrupted her abruptly.

"I, too," she almost hissed, "have learnt what it is to love!—To love, and be a Wretch for ever!"

The hand which again clasped Eliza's trembled with the vehemence of the singular girl's agitation. Eliza was touched, yet frightened.

"Dear Belinda," she said, "do not speak so gloomily! It frightens me—and, oh! you are greatly changed. What has happened, Belinda?"

"Well—we shall talk more of these wretched matters later. I have longed, I have yearned to meet some one to whom I might

speak of my misery. I think—you *did* love me, Eliza. For *your* sake, too, I have come here. How your hand trembles in mine, child!—Are you chilled?"

"The evening air is very cold," Eliza said, with an involuntary shudder.

"Is it?—I do not feel such things.—But, child, you should be happy here. What grand old trees are these on either side: how picturesquely the glancing moonbeams bring out the varied, fantastic twistings of the gnarled trunks. Are you still an enthusiast about moonlight, Eliza?"

"I—I believe so—oh, yes! quite, Belinda."

"Well—you should be. It is natural enough."

The girl said this in tones of sorrowful emotion, while a deep, wretched sigh escaped her. Just then they entered the house. In the cheerful, domestic light of the hall Eliza was able to rally her scared feelings, to wonder at herself for having ever entertained such. She warmly clasped her friend's thin hands within her own, while looking at her with sorrowful affection.

"Yes!" Belinda answered to this look; "I *am* changed. I have been very ill. Ill almost to death!"

"My poor Belinda! and you never told me! What was your illness? How you must have suffered!"

"Suffered?—Oh, God!—have I not—do I not suffer? And from this!"—as with a gesture scarcely feminine in its fierce energy the strange girl pressed her clenched hand against her heart.

Dinner had been retarded in expectation of the visitor. While she was in her room Sir Thomas had returned, and as soon as Belinda reappeared it was announced.

Sir Thomas Hartley was evidently impressed by the stately person and mien of his daughter's friend: when conversation ensued, his favorable opinions rose higher. Belinda, though with some effort, threw off much of her first strangeness of manner, and spoke on every subject the old gentleman introduced with so much ease and judgment as to convince him that her intellect was of the highest order. When he parted from her at night, it was with a feeling of profound respect for her taste and understanding; with, moreover, not a little admiration of her personal attractions, which, however faded to Eliza's eye, were yet to a stranger of a striking and elevated character.

But good Miss Alicia's loftiness sank prostrate before that of the young lady. And although Belinda courteously bestowed much of her attention upon the worthy spinster, the good-natured yet mea-

gre remarks of the latter seemed, from the moment of the visitor's advent, to have lost their value, even in her own esteem.

Not without some misgiving, Eliza, at the hour for retiring, accompanied her guest to her chamber. They traversed in silence the corridor leading to it; in silence they entered the room. Here the strange conduct of Belinda reached its acme. Closing the door carefully, she motioned her friend to a seat: still without speaking she sank into a chair herself, and with a moan, that appeared to burst from some pent-up storm of emotion, let her face fall upon her hands. Then there was a hush which Eliza, her former nervousness returning, feared to break. And then sobs, sighs, heart-wrung groans escaped Belinda's panting breast. For a space the proud head bowed, the lofty spirit quailed before the flood of passionate suffering that overwhelmed the unhappy girl.

The scene was a singular one. The small chamber-lamp with its flickering flame but partially illumined one-third of the spacious apartment, leaving the rest thick in gloom. Eliza gazed with redoubled misgiving at the haughty figure now bowed by some mysterious sorrow. Again and again she strove to speak: again and again her heart failed her. At length, Belinda abruptly raised her face and turned it full upon her. In the dim light it seemed to Eliza that the face was more startlingly altered than she had yet seen it. That the cheeks had faded into ghastlier pallor—the contraction of the brow had grown sharper,—the lines about the mouth more rigid. While the eyes, tearless through all this outburst, burned with a wilder and still more lurid flame.

"Eliza, you have sought my advice upon your affairs. Let us speak of them now."

Poor Eliza shrank from the hollow tone in which this was uttered. As, indeed, from the idea of discussing in such sad and doleful fashion a topic that should rather, she thought, be graced with smiles and roses.

"Yet first," the strange speaker continued, with a bitter smile, "you shall hear my own love-tale. Listen, Eliza.

"If my former depth of character and of heart did not surprise you, my present wretchedness evidently does. You have been so far a true friend to me; therefore you have a sort of right to know more of me than you ever knew before. Perhaps also that a glance at my early history will be needful to explain my present situation.

"Nature, doubtless, made me what I am. Yet the thoughts and habits of childhood must have been a second nature to me. I was brought up in solitude, amongst mountain scenery of the wildest

and grandest character: at an early age I found myself almost alone amidst the scenes that from infancy had formed my mind and influenced my feelings. The boldness of the hill-tops and hill-sides filled my fancy with lofty thoughts: the lovely, green valleys lying between helped to give me, perhaps, the softness and tenderness that once formed a portion of Belinda.

"Ere I went to school, constant thinking, and constant watching of my own heart, made me assured that my happiness depended upon loving and being beloved. You and I met, and our friendship was the first indulgence of my impulses. But our conversations on a yet more important interchange of affection must have shown you how entirely my happiness and hopes were doomed to be won or lost upon a single chance. That single chance is now played, Eliza. Played, and decided against me!

"With a mind more refined, a heart more than ever susceptible to tenderness, I returned to my mountain solitude. Let me be candid. I returned still worse fitted for such a life than Nature had made me. Yes, Eliza. Though you never suspected my secret, learn that, ere we parted at school, I loved the only man that, till the earth hides me, can waken a love-sigh in my bosom.

"You are surprised. I do not wonder. Eliza, you were even by my side when I first beheld him. No—do not interrupt me. And do not think of asking me to be more minute: it would be in vain. Let me only continue my dark story.

"Soon after I left school, he joined me upon one of my lonely mountain rambles. We became more intimately acquainted. He seemed—oh! he did, he *did* love me ardently. I adored him. I gave my heart, my happiness, my existence,—to his keeping. He——"

Powerful emotion, as powerfully combated, stopped her ere she could add—

"He proved traitor to his trust."

With a despairing cry the girl bowed her face anew. It drooped, lower and lower still, until the forehead rested upon her knees. Eliza was touched, interested, melted. With quick impulse she came to kneel beside the fearfully agitated Belinda; she encircled her with her arm; she rested her soft cheek against the bent head of her friend.

"My poor girl! my dearest Belinda!" she repeated tenderly and caressingly. Belinda did not reject such sympathy. She pressed closer to her companion as she went on, in a shudde whisper.

"Yes! He left me—left me, without one sigh, to roam over the solitary paths I had trodden beside him,—now rendered hateful by his cruel abandonment. Do you still wonder at the change you see in me?"

"Indeed, indeed, Belinda, I feel for you,—I pity you!" Eliza said, throwing her arms round her neck, and drawing her head over to her own shoulder.

"Well. I have come with my withered heart, to talk to you, poor child, of your own future. Let me be a warning to you, my Eliza."

Eliza was silent. There was a pause. After a little Belinda, gently freeing herself from the soft arms enclasping her, raised her head, and looked with mournful scrutiny into her friend's face.

"You say, dear child, that the sentiment you now feel is stronger, warmer—more powerful—than your former calm affection for that young Harry Talbot?"

"Oh! Belinda! it is a different sentiment altogether."

"Poor child!—Alas, for you, then!—It will never bring you happiness."

"Belinda!"

"Take counsel, Eliza, of the wounded deer. Stake not happiness, hope, life, on such a venture as the chance of mutual affection. It was our dream: nothing more. It does not exist in a world where MEN are to decide the chance. Women only can *love*. Men but toy and trifle with us in return!"

The girl spoke with passionate scorn. Her face was black; her eyes flamed; her lips writhed and curled. She clenched her hands hard, and smote them fiercely together. Eliza's weaker nature shrank from this display of feeling.

"Oh, Belinda!" she faltered, after a moment's silence, "*All* men are not—cannot be so worthless, so false. I think, nay, I am certain—certain, Belinda,—that he loves me fondly as I love him."

"Tush!" cried Belinda, in bitter scoffing. "Did not I think so, too?—Did I not believe it?—Was I not certain of it? Have not the thousands of our wretched sex who, day after day, vainly become our shame and our warning, think it?"

"But, Belinda—"

"Child, child! But a few months ago I would have sworn to you that he who now shows himself a base villain towards your too credulous friend, lived only upon my smile, or for my happiness!—Hear me. I came hither in the midst of my misery to warn you—to save you, poor fool! if I may. Tear this new fancy from your

heart. It is a gentle, timid, quaking heart. Were you left desolate, it would droop and sicken, hour by hour, till Death brought relief without Vengeance. It would not, like mine, harden in the fire of rage that consumed it, until it grew into a weapon, dangerous as man's tempered steel, to fall upon the head of the supercilious Traitor!"

"But——"

"But be warned, Eliza. Ay, you may stare at me!" the wretched girl cried, as her companion showed alarm at the increased energy of her words, voice, and expression, "but my betrayer shall yet repair, or repent his crime. He shall learn that one woman, at least, was not born to be the passive slave of his pleasures. Because the lamb looked not milder than I when I trusted him and smiled upon him, he thinks that, outraged and scorned, I dare not start to my feet with more than the spirit of the wild beast in my heart!"

Eliza, shocked and bewildered, had risen to her feet. With clasped hands, and cheeks almost as pale as those of her unhappy friend, she besought her to curb such feelings.

"Curb your own feelings, Eliza! That is still my warning—the solemn warning I have come under this roof to speak. Oh! my first and only friend, for God's sake, treat it not lightly. Let it be an antidote to the bane—the deadly poison—that now throbs feverishly in your breast. It is only the precursor of withering desolation. But if you slight my warning;—and if, at a future day, you feel the pang that now rends me—maddens me!—remember Belinda St. John. Your fate be upon your own head, Eliza Hartley. For—at what suffering to myself, God knows!—you *are* forewarned!"

"Belinda, you terrify me—you shock me by such words!" Eliza cried, at last roused to some show of spirit, though trembling from head to foot. "I must leave you—it is late, and—and you need repose. No, no, I am not displeased with you. But I *must* go, dear Belinda! To-morrow we can talk more, if you will. Good-night. I shall send my maid to you at once. Good-night."

She stooped hastily, touched Belinda's brow with her lips, and turned to leave the room.

"Good-night, then," Belinda said sorrowfully, as she rose and followed her friend to the door, "Give me your hand, Eliza; I did not intend to terrify you, poor child. Good-night. But," as Eliza passed out, "I need no maid: I can undress myself. One moment, listen—for the last time. Remember my warning! It is prophetic."

We cannot testify if the unhappy Belinda slept. Our heroine's couch often shook to her terrified startings from broken slumbers. Many were the shapes in which fancy embodied Belinda's strange words and warnings. Now, there was a corpse weltering in blood, whose pallid features were those of Harry Talbot. Now, she gazed in wordless horror upon the mangled body of her new lover. Anon, it was a stranger upon whom fell the confused effects of Belinda's prophecy, and of her threats of vengeance. Or, she gazed upon her Father's dead body, her heart telling her that Belinda was his Murderess. Or, in the fantastic gravity of dreams, Eliza looked down upon her own untimely grave, and still it was her friend who had made it. The morning sun glanced in through the chinks of the oaken shutters of her window, ere the harassed dreamer sank into undisturbed sleep.

Long after her usual hour she awoke. Her first recollection brought before her the pale, stern, and impassioned face of Belinda St. John as she had last seen it. Involuntarily she shuddered. Still affected by the visions of the night, the solemn warning she had received presented itself in startling colors. Yet why it should do so, she could not explain to herself. It was surely nothing more than an ebullition of the strong passion which had, on the night before, agitated her friend, thus bursting forth with the peculiar vehemence of her character. There is an egotism in wretchedness which, out of circumstances similar to those that have created itself, will augur wretchedness to everyone else. Some such egotism must have occasioned Belinda's warning upon this occasion.

Yet, viewing the matter even in this light, there was much to startle Eliza. To know that Love had wrought so dire a change as was exhibited in her unhappy friend, was the source of a thousand fears. What, she could not help asking, would be her own state of mind, if her dearest affections were flung back upon her with scorn and contempt? Misery, bitter, endless misery would indeed be her portion! The very thought was torturing. Would it not be wise to try and curb her trusting and irresistible devotion to one who, perhaps—but no!—that could never be. His very soul depended on her for happiness.

Belinda had prophesied his treachery. But, stripping her augury of everything but the egotism, Eliza had ascribed to her misery, another view of the case involuntarily presented itself. Was Belinda St. John one to be truly and faithfully loved? Was she not too passionate, too moody, too violent, too haughty? Men liked

none of these qualities in mistress or in wife. And—Eliza could not help asking—might not a discovery of her peculiar temperament have reasonably alarmed and alienated her lover?

Then,—whispered girlish vanity,—was she, Eliza, so likely to disappoint the man who had once given her his affection? The "No" was whispered back. And there were numbers—oh! hundreds of instances in which men proved themselves even more constant and faithful than women. In short, the whole matter that had so fearfully disturbed her now seemed devoid of any element of alarm or disquietude. "I am a weak fool," thought the girl, indignantly, "and I will—and must—shake off the timidity of spirit that, without being able to assign a cause, thus bows before one who seems herself to act more from headstrong impulse than from sober reason."

And yet, the moment after, the pale face of her friend, filled with so much new and painful meaning, seemed to gaze angrily at the thinker. She shuddered; she grew doubtful. But suddenly the terrible question occurred to her:

"Good Heaven! can it be that the poor girl is insane?"

Incoherency and wildness certainly appeared in Belinda's manner. and sentiments. The thought was dismissed with shrinking; yet its very existence had still further stripped her words of any import.

Her maid had by this time appeared, and still revolving in her mind the events of the preceding night, she went through and finished her toilet. And then she left her room to give Belinda a greeting in her own chamber, on the first morning of her visit to Hartley Court.

"We shall now converse quietly and sensibly," resolved Eliza. "And on terms of equality, too. I am no longer a child. Belinda must see that."

But Belinda was not in her chamber. The young hostess descended to the breakfast-room, and found it also unoccupied, save by Miss Alicia. She rang, and Reily, the suitor of Kitty Gow, as the reader may perhaps remember, appeared in answer to the summons.

"Has not Sir Thomas come down stairs yet, Reily?"

"Long ago, Miss Eliza," answered the servant, who, in virtue of his character for waggery, enjoyed considerable freedom of speech in the establishment. As he presently proved, by adding: "He is set out to look afther the cracked young lady that came last night, Miss."

"Sir!" Eliza exclaimed, in a tone of displeasure and surprise.

"Sure that's what myself takes her to be, Miss. Ay, as cracked as Polly Mac Namara, that wanted me to go to tay with her in the moon."

"Why do you dare to say such a thing, Reily?"

"I'll tell you, Miss Eliza. 'Twas just at the break of mornin', an' I was in a raal *sauvaun* * of a sleep; when I thought I heard somebody callin' out, 'Tim Reily! Tim! Tim!' With that I cocked my elbow undher me, an' listened. Sure enough, 'Tim! Tim!' was called over again. 'Don't bother me,' says I, 'let me finish my dhrame.' 'Get up, you sleepy hound!' says the voice, 'don't you hear the dhrawin'-room bell ringin' the house down?' 'Who's ringin' it, Peggy?' says I, for now I knew Peggy's voice, Miss Eliza,— she sleeps nigh-hand the bell. 'Go an' thry, Tim!' says Peggy, an' off she went. Well, now I heard the ringin' myself. 'I wondher what's the matther?' says I, 'maybe it's the poor ould house is a-fire.' And then I brought to mind how once upon a time, Miss Alicia's ould cat stuck in the bell-rope, an' brought me runnin' up in the middle of a winther's night to attend her Ladyship, an' faix! I was for goin' to bed again, when another loud ring come—"

"Reily, am I to be all the morning listening to your roundabout story?"

"Don't turn off for a little start, Miss Eliza, an' I'll go bail we'll come to it!"

And, hopeless of learning the truth in any but the way that pleased Mr. Timothy Reily, Eliza let him proceed after that very digressive fashion. She learned thus. That Belinda St. John was the person who, at break of day, had rung for an attendant:—that upon Reily's appearance in the drawing-room, she had got from him the key of the hall-door, and had gone out;—that, since his "raal sauvaun" was broken up, he thought he might as well have a walk himself;—that he went into the plantation before described as bordering on the river;—and that, from its concealment, he observed certain actions on the part of the strange lady, which, taken with the fact of her issuing forth alone "at such an unchristian hour in the mornin', when no one but a fool of a bird would lave his bed,— or a worse fool of a worm to put himself in the bird's way!" convinced him that the lady was, as he termed it, "cracked." He described her as first looking up, for some time, at the top of the big ash-tree;—then, as clasping her hands, and talking to herself;— then, as rushing to the water's edge;—then, suddenly kneeling upon

* Comfortable drowsiness.

the grass;—lastly, as starting up, and walking, in a hurried manner, out of his view. And, while describing this singular mode of action, the narrator threw in divers faithful touches, by way of illustration:—

"Here she went,"—putting himself into a solemn attitude, and turning up his eyes. "Wow, wow, wow!" throwing his face into a pensive cast, moving his lips, and emitting sounds intended to denote that the voice, without words, had alone reached his ear. Anon, he walked forward. "This yallow patthern on the carpet is the river, I'm supposin', Miss Eliza;" and he looked down with a ludicrous melancholy of visage; then he dropped on his knee, sprang up, paced quickly to the door, turned round, and bowed, as actors do ere the curtain falls. "That's the very way it was, Miss Eliza. And don't you call them cracked capers?"

Eliza, though really troubled that her friend's eccentricities should so soon be made subject of remark for the very domestics, had with difficulty kept her countenance during Reily's narrative of the morning. Nevertheless, she succeeded in putting on, at its close, an air of grave and deep displeasure.

"Now, Sir, listen to me," she said, "I have allowed you to run on only because I wished to ascertain how far what you had to tell might excuse the opinion you presumed to form and express with regard to a lady who is my guest. It was impertinent of you to follow her this morning that you might observe her actions. Impertinent to comment upon them as you have done—and to me. Mark what I say. If to any other person I find that you thus disrespectfully mention the name of Miss St. John,—notwithstanding even the good service which won you your present place,—I will immediately apply to Sir Thomas to have you dismissed. Now go!"

Reily made his penitent bow and exit; not one whit cast down by the rebuke.

"Devil a concarn it is of mine," he soliloquized, as he crossed the hall. "All Tim Reily has a right to be on the watch for, is to take good care she doesn't get nigh enough to bite him. An' I don't think I'll let her. She couldn't come round that, barrin' she was mighty sweet on me, aforehand, as I'm told them cracked people sometimes pretends to be for their own ends. And though she is a fine lady, there's no denyin' it, she *is* cracked, whatever Miss Eliza may think; an' there's no knowin' what she might be up to. But I'm on my guard. She'll never get nigh me. An', by the hockey, we have one to come nigh us that'll never bite or offer to snap at

us, so we have!" And with a caper elicited by the thought, he danced down to the kitchen to enquire—"What's the rason Peggy made the noise so early that mornin'?"

CHAPTER V.

Shortly after Reily's disappearance from the breakfast parlour, Eliza saw Belinda and her father coming up the avenue. At a nearer approach, Belinda's face seemed much more than on the previous night, to wear the likeness it had borne in days gone by. Deep sadness, rather than high and strange excitement, was now its prevailing expression; and her jet-black eye, though still alight with a portion of its recent meaning, was less lurid in its depths than she had last seen it. "Perhaps," thought Eliza, "the softening influence of nature has relieved my poor friend, by calling forth some weeping bursts of passion."

Sir William Judkin had now been some days from home. At parting from Eliza he had named a time for returning, but came not as punctually as was usual with him. Our heroine was anxious for his arrival. Apart from the pleasure of seeing him, great in anticipation as that was, she wished that Belinda might judge, from his presence, what little ground appeared for her fears of his constancy and honour. Eliza also longed to have her admit that Sir William was, in every respect, worthy of a lady's love, or, according to Malvolio, "worth a lady's eye."

A very slight hint served to send Nanny the Knitter, to inquire the cause of his absence. He could not return for another week. Particular business, connected, in fact, with the arrangement of part of his late uncle's embarrassments, unavoidably detained him.

During this listless pause, although Eliza and Belinda took many walks together, they were not so frequently in each other's company as they had been at school. The visitor seemed to prefer solitary rambles, and when confined to the house, generally, excepting at meal-times, sat alone in her chamber. Eliza's spirits grew saddened and depressed. Her lover's absence, and the morbid shadow thrown round her by her friend's melancholy, jointly produced the effect. For, since their conversation upon the night of her arrival at Hartley Court, deep melancholy and reserve, instead of her first

agitating vehemence, continued to characterize Belinda. That singular conversation was not resumed. Eliza sought not its renewal, and her friend never by a single word alluded to it.

For some days beyond a week, Belinda St. John had been at Hartley Court, without bringing joy or gratification to her youthful companion, or without making a friend around her. At Tim Reily's showing, notwithstanding his mistress's orders and caution, the servants deemed her "flighty," or "cracked." Waving this opinion, the meanest among them revolted at her unbending, imperious coldness. She was attended by them merely as their master's guest, without any inclination to do her a kindness.

Sir Thomas Hartley still conversed with her on topics generally supposed out of the range of those with which it is sought to entertain a young lady. But her rayless gloom of manner had evidently destroyed his first interest. Miss Alice absolutely dreaded her stern brow: it made the amiable old lady wince, she knew not why. It must be supposed, that all this could not escape the observation of the person most interested. Yet, she did not seem to notice any thing. She was always wrapped up in herself, or, to the exclusion of every exterior interest, employed with her own thoughts.

Upon the eleventh night of her visit, (Eliza remembered it well.) our heroine had retired to her chamber, when Nanny the Knitter sent up, from the kitchen, a respectful request to be permitted an audience. The boon was granted. With many duckings, and much dusting of her feet with the tail of her cloak, the old woman entered the chamber, and, as if conscious that nothing appertaining to, or at all bringing to mind the other sex, should presume to appear there, she took off and left outside the door her foxy masculine hat.

"Sit down, Nanny; you look tired," said Eliza.

"Thankee kindly, Miss Eliza, my honey. Wid your purty lave, I'll just plank myself on my hunkers, the way I'm in the fashion o' doin', and the way that's most fitther for my sort, in the same room wid one o' the quality."

Eliza concluded, from Nanny's face, that she had something of importance to communicate. But even Nanny's preparatory proceedings would have intimated as much. After having "planked herself on her hunkers," she deliberately took out her knitting apparatus, which, with her, in every presence, and under every circumstance, was as necessary a preliminary to chat, as were his few inches of thread to the forensic orator mentioned in the

"Spectator." If he could not properly twist the thread of his plain cause without simultaneously twisting his pack-thread, Nanny also, should be permitted to knit her stockings and her narrative together.

With ominous rapidity, Eliza's thoughts flew from Nanny's solemn preparation, and her mysterious countenance, to Belinda's prognostic that her love would prove unfortunate. Fearful that the question might produce the mention of Sir William's name in some way distressing or dishonouring to herself, she dreaded to demand Nanny's business. At length Nanny broke silence.

"What I have to say, Miss Eliza, my pet, had be betther tould betwixt yourself an' myself. An' so, you may all as well send the good little girl to her bed."

"Why, Nanny, this is a solemn and formal preface you make. What can be the matter? Does it relate to me?"

"It does, an' it doesn't, my honey pet; an' there's every word o' the thruth for you. Don't let it bother you—now," after she had momentarily contemplated Eliza's features—"there's nothin' in it about your Father, Sir Thomas, the blessins on him. Or about Square Talbot, that we wish well, though we want no more rubbins wid him. Or about Sir William, the darlin' of a boy. Not a word in the world. It's all about women: an' the most about one sart'n woman, or lady—I don't know which is the right name to call her."

As soon as, in her own way, Nanny had come to the name she knew Eliza thought of, that young lady felt much relieved. And now she rang her bell; told her maid, who appeared in answer to it, that she could dispense with her for the night,—Nanny was going to tell her a story; and, as it grew late, the girl need not remain up. Accordingly, Nanny and her protegée continued alone, without fear of interruption.

"An' now, Miss Eliza, my honey, would it be in coorse o' manners to ax what kind of a lady she is that come to see you, here, in your good Father's house?"

"First—why do you put such a question, Nanny?" asked Eliza, in mingled surprise and perturbation.

"Faix, an' indeed, my honey pet, I have a good rason to ax you, the rason I have isn't out o' curosity, but all out of love an' duty to your pretty sef. The same I'm in duty bound to have. But—first,—it's what *I'd* want is to know if you're sart'n sure of the sort she is?"

"Well, Nanny, to indulge your good wishes towards me, and while I am convinced you would not lightly intrude on this occa-

sion, I admit that I know little more of Miss St. John than that she has been my school-acquaintance,—and friend,—and always supposed to be of high birth and blood. Farther—though her manners certainly bear out the last fact—I, to this hour, know nothing."

"That's not the thing I was for axin', Miss Eliza, my honey."

"What, then, did your question import?"

"May I never do an ill turn, this holy an' blessed night,"—Nanny bent over her knitting, and spoke in a very low whisper—"but she's either moon-sthruck then, or, I'm afraid, mad, out-an'-out—or else, don't be angry, my pet—ould Nanny wouldn't speak without rason—a bould woman. Lord keep us from cratures o' the kind, an' from all evil doins!"

"Take care, Nanny! The young lady is my friend—is in my Father's house. You astonish me—shock me!"

"Oh, faix, an' as I'm a lump of a sinner, Miss Eliza, my honey, blessed be the Holy Name! that's the way I was in, my own sef, wid what I seen, on the head of it."

"Tell your story, Nanny. But, remember, carefully and faithfully."

"That I mayn't sin, Miss Eliza, but you'll have it, as thrue an' as clane as if I was on my marrow-bones forneut the priest.

"It was ere-a-last night, my pet,—an' sure that was the last night o' the month, of all nights in the year,—I was at Andy Maher's wake, rest his poor sowl!"—

"Nanny, you seem determined to try my patience," broke in Eliza, too disturbed to be a patient listener.

"Ntchu, ntchu"—(we cannot find better orthography for the smack of Nanny's tongue against her palate).

"Ntchu, Ntchu,—och, sure there's nothin' farther from my thoughts, Miss Eliza, my honey, as in duty bound to you and yours,—an' to yoursef, above all. Bud, my ould tongue has sich a way of clack, clack, ever an' always. An' I'm so *cooramuch*,* sittin' here; so purty an' so snug, bless the good providhers! Well, to come sthraight upon the thing we're discoorsin' about. It was apast twelve in the night when I left the wake, Miss Eliza, my honey. I was going to take my bed at Shaun-a-gow's that night. Shaun, himsef, was at the wake, an' so I knew I could get in. Whether or no, it's seldom's the time for this while agone, you'll get them in their honest, quiet beds, at Shaun-a-gow's: they do have roarin' work at the anvil, in the forge, at night, more nor by day.

* Exceedingly comfortable.

The boys comes there, I'm tould, to get wicked weapons made for themsefs out of ould iron of all sorts. The times is growin' bad, I'm afeard, Miss Eliza, my pet, for us poor women: there'll be bad doins goin' on, as sure as this needle is runnin' to and fro'—the Lord purtect the poor, an' the wake, an' the forlorn! But I'll tell you all about these doins, another time, when we'll have the night to oursefs an' nothin' else to spake of.—Ntchu, ntchu;—*well.*—As I was thramping to Shaun-a-gow's, just as I come widin a little sthretch o' the aveny gate, below,—you know, Miss, I seldom or never makes much noise wid the way o' walkin' I have—"

Eliza nodded assent.

"The moon was a late one, Miss Eliza, my honey. It wasn't high up enough to shine down sthraight; but the light of it was here an' there, whenever nothin' was to the fore to shet it out. You know there's a little wood, like, runnin' down to the river, that wouldn't let it shine through; an' so the road, at that place, was purty dark; an' then the aveny threes gave a help to make it a bit darker. But, through the arch that's forment the gate, it come bould, as white as any sheet, an' looked quare an' odd. 'Well,' says I to mysef, 'isn't it a curos way the moon shines over that one place? Its purty,' says I, 'to look on it, when a body is in a right mind, an' not afeard, at sich a time o' the night. But'—says I, agin, stoppin' talkin', 'what's that goin' through it?' an' I stopped the feet, too, to look closer. I seen a tall woman, Miss Eliza, comin' over the stile at the side o' the aveny gate, an' she crossed right along the sheet o' moonshine, and she went undher the arch. At the first look, it was, for all the world, as like a ghost as one egg is like another—a ghost that ud be warmin' itself in moonlight thracks, after comin' out o' the could darkness that was round about it, every where. I often heard o' ghosts; an', sure an' sure, there's sich things, they say,—the praises be for ever given, I never seen one yet, though I thravelled often by night, in the most lonesome places. But, a ghost's foot doesn't give a sound—not as much as my own foot, that gives so little—an' I herd the stamp, stamp, through the silence acrass the road. For I was nigh hand, Miss Eliza, my honey. 'That's the lady that come to see Miss Eliza,' says I; 'she's cracked in the brains, they say, an' goes about this way to be spakin' her *raumaush* * to the moon, as her likes has the fashion o' doin', the world over.'"

"Can this, indeed, be possible?" ejaculated Eliza, much moved. "May you not have mistaken the person, Nanny?"

* Nonsense.

"I know'd her gait o' walkin, Miss Eliza, my honey, afther she tuck the first start out o' me. But it come into my head, I'd make more sure."

"And did you quite assure yourself?"

"Harken me out, my honey. I came here, to the house, the last night, an' I got my own little bed,—may the blessins o' this life an' the next be in store for the givers! an' my good supper afore it. An' I said my share o' night prayers near the fire; afore I went to sleep, though my thought was taken to sleep little. As soon as ever there was silence, widin' an' widout, I rose up, an'—knowin' the ould house so well—I stole,—asy, asy,—to the stairfoot, in the hall.—Sure it's time for me to know the ins an' outs of it, as well as another; an' no wondher. Well, I opened the dour that lades down from the hall into the kitchen—sorrow's in it for one dour, it nigh frightened me, wid its creakin'—an' I peeped about an' about. It wasn't long till the clock sthruck, an' I reckoned the sthrokes, one by one, till I counted a good dozen. 'It's about the time,' says I, thinkin'. Well, my pet; it wasn't very long, agin, till I hard a foot comin' down the stairs, an' I shet the dour, asier than I opened it, all but a little, an' I spied out through the split. Sure enough, I seen the body I was spyin' for, unlockin' the parlour dour. She had a candle in her hand; so I could remark her. In she stepped, as asy as myself could do it. But, for as cute as she went to work, I hard her takin' the bar from the window——"

"What!" interrupted Eliza, "are you quite certain, Nanny?"

"Wait, my pet. I hard the window risin' up, ever so quiet an' azy, agin. An' it went down, then, an' the shetthers came together, closin' outside. I waited a space, an' I stole into the room. I seen the candle in the grate; an' I seen she pult the shetthers afther her, as soon as she got out."

"My God!" cried the listener, confounded. "And then? Did you then go back to bed, Nanny?"

"No, my honey! that 'ud be lavin' the stockin' unfinished for the sake o' the last one or two rows. No, faix, I waited an' waited in the hall; an' it was a good hour, or more nor an hour, afore I hard her steps comin' to the window. Then I stole behint the door that lades to the kitchen, over agin; an' I hard *her* stalin' in; an' boultin' the winder afther her; an' lockin' the parlour-dour the way she found it; an' goin' up stairs, wid her candle in her hand. An' as she crossed the hall, sure I seen her, face to face, through the split."

"Oh, Nanny!—this is most strange—it frightens—shocks

me! What am I to do?—how arrange? It must not be made a talking matter, whatever happens. Tell me, Nanny, have you communicated these matters to any other person?"

"To no livin' soul, Miss Eliza. 'For,' says I, 'it wouldn't be the best way to make a noise o' the thing, because the honey, Miss Eliza, ud gain no good will by havin' it known or said she war friends wid a bould woman like her, Lord keep us all from one o' the sort!—or if she is not so bad, only cracked an' moon-sthruck, it wouldn't be charity to tell the world o' the poor creature's *tanthrums.*"*

"I am obliged by your consideration and prudence, Nanny. And, till I make up my mind on the subject, you have my request to act the same part. You could not possibly be mistaken in the person?"

"Ntchu, ntchu! Wasn't it to make cock-sure I done all this Miss Eliza? But, Lord save us!" lowering her voice, and raising two fingers, with a knitting-kneedle stuck between them—"Hushth, what's that, now!"

With startled face and breath kept in, Eliza listened. Belinda's chamber was the third from her's, in a corridor passage that ran the length of the back of the house. Eliza distinctly heard a door creak on its hinges. A stately and measured step came along the passage. She was in an agony of terror, she knew not why. Nanny stole, without fully rising from her former position, to Eliza's side, where, again squatting, "on her hunkers," she looked like an old puss startled in her form. The step stopped at the door of our heroine's chamber. The handle turned. Eliza, unconsciously, laid her hand on Nanny's shoulder; while, on her part, the at last discomfited Knitter held fast by the young lady's skirts. The door opened, and Belinda St. John, at her usual slow pace, but with even more than her usual dignity, joined to a renewal of the high excitement of look that had formerly terrified Eliza, walked into the apartment.

"She hard me," whispered Nanny, "an' I'll get my killin' from her."

"Eliza Hartley," said Belinda, not seeming to notice the conscience-stricken Nanny, "I am come to bid you a farewell."

"To say farewell, Belinda!" Eliza faltered, while she strove to compose her features and control her nerves.

"Yes, Eliza. You are surprised, and I do not wonder. You

* Mad vagaries.

cannot conjecture why I should, at this strange hour, I will even admit, in so mysterious a manner, depart from your roof. I cannot now explain to you the motives that influence me. Let it suffice that I have ample reasons for my conduct. Reasons, which, at another time, you may perhaps learn."

So far, Belinda kept her place in the middle of the chamber, at some distance from Eliza and the old woman. Eliza heard her, too bewildered to know what to reply. She could only stammer.

"But, Belinda,—how is it possible at this hour,—By what conveyance can you"— Belinda interrupted her.

"That also I cannot explain at present. Be satisfied that all needful arrangements have been made. And I *must* leave Hartley Court to-night—within this hour."

"Dear Belinda,—my Father—what will he think?—Let me at least call him!" cried the astonished girl.

"There is no time. Neither do I wish to see Sir Thomas at present."

"But—but—it will seem so strange, so unkind even, if you leave us in such a manner!"

"You will not deem me unkind, I trust, Eliza. Strange I must seem—I cannot help that. Unkind to you I am not in thought or heart. And other parts of my conduct, while your guest, will, doubtless, seem strange also. You do not know that when sleep closed the eyes of all other dwellers beneath this roof, I have been abroad and about."

Nanny gave a cautious pull to Eliza's skirt.

"Even for that I had my reasons, ample reasons. Whatever interpretation my conduct may receive, I am not,—as some menials in your house whisper, Eliza—, I am not *mad!*"

She advanced a little. Nanny withdrew the only portion of her round person which, from the way in which she squatted, she could prudently put in motion. Belinda continued.

"Believe me, Eliza,—although of late I have suffered and thought until my mind span towards the verge of insanity, I am yet mistress of myself, and perfectly understand the why and the wherefore of my actions. To others, my intellect, with my fate, may seem darkened. Farewell. Before very long I will clear up all that is doubtful in my conduct. Farewell, dear Eliza.

As she she drew nearer Nanny had increased her twitches at Eliza's skirt, accompanying them with "nudges" of her elbow, as she now whispered:—

"Don't put thrust in her, Miss Eliza, my pet. It's only their

cute way of talkin', till they can once lay hoult. Bid her stay off, an' let us call up Tim an' the Masther."

But Eliza's self-possession had in a degree returned. She arose to receive her friend's adieus, still urging upon her, however, the propriety of deferring her departare until morning.

"No, Eliza, it cannot be. I did not even intend to disturb you with verbal leave-taking. I had written you a note, and purposed leaving Hartley Court without further farewell. But seeing your light, I concluded you had not retired to rest, and could not resist the temptation of seeing you again. God bless you, my first, my dearest, my only friend. No—you must not come beyond your room with me. Farewell!—What! do you fear me, Eliza?—Have I lost *your* love also?"

Her tone of bitter pain touched Eliza, even through her bewilderment. She clasped her arms round her friend, and warmly kissed her.

"Fear you, dear Belinda!" she answered. "Oh, no, I do not! I am only surprised and pained at this abrupt and strange parting. But if it must be so, farewell!"

Tears from Belinda's eyes fell fast and heavy upon her face. She held her for a moment tight as she whispered:—

"Eliza, my first and last words to you must be the same. Be faithful to your first love—or—Remember my warning!"

Again she kissed her agitated friend, then released her, and hastily quitted the room, the door of which she drew after her. They—Eliza and the Knitter—heard her re-enter her own apartment. A couple of minutes had scarce elapsed when she again quitted it, and softly descended the stairs. Through the silence they heard a faint sound, which Nanny in a whisper announced to be the opening of one of the lower windows. And then all again was still.

Eliza Hartley and Belinda St. John did not soon meet again; but when they did, it was amid scenes of grief and horror, for an account of which, the reader must have patience to wait till almost our closing chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE astonishment caused to every member of the family at Hartley Court by the strange and abrupt disappearance of the visitor, was still further augmented by the discovery, that from her room had also vanished every article she had brought with her. A heavy trunk, which had constituted the chief portion of her luggage had, in some unaccountable manner, been removed. All inquiry failed to throw light upon the manner of Belinda St. John's nocturnal departure. The mystery was impenetrable. And for many reasons Sir Thomas Hartley and his family agreed to let the subject drop, and as far as possible to avoid any mention of so extraordinary a visitor.

Therefore it was, that although on the very day subsequent to Belinda's disappearance, Sir William Judkin reappeared unexpectedly at Hartley Court, all allusions to the visit of that young lady were studiously avoided by Eliza, by Sir Thomas, or by the much-scandalized Miss Alicia. In sooth, in the sunshine of her lover's presence, Eliza, at least, found all disquieting or unpleasant recollections fast melting away. What, but a smile, could Belinda's denunciations and menaces call up, as, by her lover's side, she received, day after day, fresh proofs of his untiring and ardent devotion? No. The remembrance of her friend's visit, of its mystery, its gloom, its dispiriting influence, soon was no more to the happy girl than as the wild dream of night, which, in broad day, and surrounded by friends and by prosperity, we glance back upon rather for mockery than from fear.

No matter what we have previously conjectured concerning our pretty heroine's procrastinating practices with her lover,—she could not, surely, share any of the nature of the household cat, when that little half-tamed hyena sports with her prey, and seems merely to laugh at its lengthened anguish? Whatever may really have been Eliza's reasons for keeping her captive in similar agonies, we can at last announce his arrival at a comparative state of felicity. Upon the morning of a day dedicated to an excursion, in which the reader shall accompany him, Sir William, when he least expected to hear them, caught the few accents that made him, we presume, an ecstatic man. And, although between his speculative approval as a lover, and his real acceptance in another character, Miss Alicia, acutely alive to the proprieties as well as to the sweets of the tender passion, contrived to cast an interval of probation;—still, while the lover

prepared to attend his mistress upon the excursion mentioned——his newly acquired certainty of mutual attachment, conferred a joy, which not even that tantalizing prospect could disturb.

The reader will please to observe, that our heroine, and, of course, all our other personages, are now six months older than when he and they first became acquainted. We have arrived, in fact, at the season when white-bearded Winter lords it over the infant Year. It is the month of January, 1798,—that baleful year which, yet in its cradle, was doomed to witness, in Ireland, such scenes of convulsion, of carnage, and of horror, as, to this day, leave a shuddering recollection amongst the inhabitants of our country. "They were dreadful times," the Irish peasant will mutter; "may we never see the like again!"

A party of dragoons, on their route from Wexford, where they had been quartered, seized, at the market of the next village, the horses of some of Sir Thomas's tenantry, overloaded them with baggage, ill-used them, and, at the termination of a long march, not only gave no payment for their services, but exacted money before they would restore them. Some of the same regiment subsequently made an incursion into his neighbourhood, laid hands on the property of his poorer dependents, and, when remuneration was sought, bestowed only blows and insult. Sir Thomas made application for redress to their commanding officer: the answer, "that the *Croppy* rascals were treated as they deserved," by no means satisfied his ideas of justice. He resolved to appeal to higher authority. The announcement of a review by an inspecting general of the military force of the county, seemed to afford his opportunity. He would state his case of grievance to the general, on the review-field, in the face of the soldiers and their officers. This was for him an unfortunate resolution.

Eliza, not without a feminine flutter at the idea of a muster of so many hundreds of red-coated heroes, had prayed to be allowed to accompany her father. True as the index to the hour, the needle to its pole, the shadow to its substance, (we wish we could, without much pause or trouble, invent some new figure,) her Knight waited upon her. By the way, though the last figure, like the other two, is hackeneyed enough, and though we cannot just now replace it with an original one, it strikes us that, at least a novel use may be made of it. Are not human attachments, alas! more generally comparable with substance and shadow than allusion has hitherto shown them? When the sun shines, or even when the less lustrous moon is brilliant, the shade attends upon the person who

walks in the beam of either. But when clouds or storms blot out the god of the firmament, or when the moon is gone, and darkness wraps the world, the duteous shadow is no longer in waiting. And, during the gloom of our reverses, is it not just so with the obsequious followers in the blaze of former prosperity? Do they not prove themselves shadows, indeed, vanishing with the decrease of the ray, which, falling upon us, had drawn them into our train? Well! one phenomenon seems as inevitable as the other, and cannot be corrected by any prosing sorrow of our's.

Our three friends set out in Sir Thomas's ample and rather heavy family carriage, and without any mishap arrived on the review-ground. It was a large, level field, not far from Hartley Court, and also contiguous to the ancient town of Wexford. The whole military force, which for some time had been assembled, showed, at the first glance, but a very small proportion of regular soldiers. In fact, whether from the imperfect information received by Government, the isolation of the district, or the character for superior industry and intelligence attributed to its inhabitants, nothing like a force sufficient to curb the insurrection, which quickly followed, had yet been sent into the county of Wexford. Now, in January, 1798, only a few months from actual warfare, there mustered for inspection but a couple of troops of regular dragoons, with about three hundred militia; while the great remainder of a thousand men, or more, was made up of yeomen horse and foot. An undisciplined, motley, and grotesque body, for whom old Lehamberg's humourous description, in 1688, of his Northern Irish colleagues, might in a degree stand good.

It is our intention to take the reader by the arm, and, in the suite of Sir Thomas Hartley, Eliza, and Sir William Judkin, point out to him the different elements of which the array was composed. And, during our progress, we intend to be in good humour, and to smile whenever we meet excitement for our risibility. For, in truth, we are weary of the seriousness of the last chapters, and disposed to relax the muscles of our countenance.

Yet, before we engage in our walk of inspection, we are called upon to notice a certain character, who seems to think himself connected with the interests of our heroine, and accordingly claims our passing regard.

It was a fine afternoon, although one in the icicle-bearded month of January. Old Winter had tried to put on a smile: the sun shone out with a clear, sharp lustre, through a frosty atmosphere. The sunshine was brilliant and cheery—as on such days

it always is. If the young heart be free from care, a desire for brisk, laughing exercise is inspired by such weather. The air, chastened of the drowsy fog, passes in a free current through the lungs, and the blood is sent freshly through the frame. The firmament is a brilliant blue; the earth, having its clinging clod dried up, is pleasant to the foot, and the wish for the bounding walk involuntarily starts into the mind. Had Eliza been at home, near her ash-tree, alone, and unobserved, perhaps she would have given way to a girlish longing for a race: as it was, she soon tired of the gloomy old carriage, and, with her father, and, it need scarce be added, her lover, descended to walk about the field.

As she tripped about leaning on Sir Thomas's arm, Sir William, at her other side, anxiously sought to catch her slightest whisper of opinion; not for the purpose, it is deemed, of questioning its cogency, but that he might assent to it heart and soul, no matter what it proved to be, as "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best." Such is the tiny Tyrant, that, not content to give the heart away, he bestows, along with it, all our faculties and perceptions, so that, under his influence, your true lover is, at best, a somewhat stupid fellow. Yet, strange to say, he is valued for that very defect by the one who, excepting that she is mortal, is, in all other respects, a divinity—that is, to the sightless eyes of her infatuated "thrall." But this is digression upon digression: indeed, we begin to suspect ourselves of a prodigious inclination to gossiping.

A severe frost generally suspends the labour of those employed in cultivating the earth, as can be vouched even by our London readers, whose ears have been invaded, about Christmas-time, with the startling whoop of "Poor gardeners froze out." But the husbandman, particularly, is made idle by the rigours of a frosty season: to this circumstance we may partly attribute the presence of a number of peasantry on the review-ground. At the side of the field opposite that upon which the troops appeared in line, they were collected in various groups. And perhaps, even had the weather been auspicious for country work, many amongst them would not have lost this opportunity to witness—under the impression that they might yet be called to cope with the men before them—a display of military evolution.

Much jeering remark might be heard from them as they descanted on the unsoldierlike appearance of "the Shoneens," or "Johnnys"—a term of derision applied to the lower class of the opposite persuasion, who had been planted, by certain landed proprietors, among

the native peasantry, as, in some degree, an antidote to the amazing fructification of Catholicism. Even to the inexperienced eye, the bungling and slovenly attempts at martial appearance of many of these poor men, were quite visible; and the abhorring peasant would not forfeit an opportunity of allowing some of his hatred to ooze out in humoursome contempt. Mixed with bitter taunt, there might also be overheard a muttered threat, or perhaps a more steady remark upon the best manner of contending with such enemies.

In passing these groups, Sir Thomas Hartley was greeted by cordial salutations of love and good-will. Indeed, notwithstanding his different religion, the Baronet was in reality regarded in no other light than that of one who, at some future day, would be a commander over "the boys," in the expected insurrection.

As our party approached a corner of the field, the most remote from the military, they observed a crowd assembled about a particular spot; while a voice, hoarse from over-exertion, bellowed from amongst them—

"It's on the sheet, an' it's on the dice!—Twenty-four is three pound—an' I won't pay you in your paper-rags, either—no, *ma-hurp-an-duoul!*—you moost get it in white an' yallow—Twenty-four is three pound—Thirty is four shillins—Forty is three tasthers!—Rowl in, here, my sportin' devarthers!—Faint heart never won a fair lady!—Worse than lose you can't—an', by the powers, you'll win!—Goold and silver for the ould bits o' brass!—Is there no *spuddoch* * wid any o' ye?"

Ere the close of this speech, the crowd immediately encircling the speaker divided, and gave Sir Thomas a partial view of his person. The Baronet was somewhat of a curious student of his fellow-men of every class. He felt an impulse to stop a moment and look more closely at the fellow. Eliza pressed his arm; he became alive to his situation, and moved forward. But much further progress was now a work of some difficulty. Outer circles of peasants had closed round the fashionable party, as well as round others of the same rank, all eager to be spectators, at least until the inspecting general should arrive and the review begin, of the losses and gains, the hopes and disappointments, of such of their class as might venture to try their fortune "on the sheet." Eliza shrank from a bustle through the increasing crowd more than she had done from standing still: she also recollected her father's dis-

* Spirit.

position to be amused with such characters as that of this rustic gamester, and, at her instance, the gentlemen gave over their endeavours to make way.

A group, composed, with but few exceptions of the younger peasantry, encircled a small deal-table, over which bent the agitator of the scene. He was a man of middle age and bulky form. From the tendency of his dark sandy hair and whiskers to assume a greyish cast, and from the appearance of one or two slight furrows in his cheek, he might be about fifty; but his face was ruddy, and, even without the effects of the weather now so visible upon it, must have shown rather a youthful colour. When his full, well-formed lips rested on each other, they protruded forward with an expression of bold self-confidence; and when in motion, always showed a half-suppressed, jeering smile. Occasionally, as he raised his head, his dark hazel eye shot round from face to face with such rapidity, that the person it scrutinized scarcely became aware of the glance which conveyed to the acute observer, his character, or his state of feeling. The complex expression of the man's visage was made up of habitual cunning, a chuckling consciousness of superior sagacity, comprising perhaps contempt for his dupes, and all glossed over by a frank, bullying, good humour.

Industry stamps value upon acquired means, indeed, upon acquirement of every kind, while sudden and undeserved gains generally seem to be as little regarded by their possessor, as, is he himself by the world at large. Successful knaves often spend as fast as they get; and, amongst the lower classes at least, whatever may be their uniform good fortune, they never even *look* respectable. Their very clothes indicate their unsettled state of self-estimation. In the present instance, our individual rogue was dressed in that style of shifting contrivance which marks his tribe. His coat, originally manufactured at the nation's expense, and worn by some one of his Majesty's soldiers, had undergone a process, by no means unusual, for adaptation to its present tenant. First, its cape had been stripped off; then it had been dipped into the hatter's vat, whence it emerged boasting a nondescript colour, liable, at a distance, to be called black, but, at a nearer view, showing the primitive underground of dusky red. The fellow's vest was of dappled calf-skin, the hairy side out, and buttoned (let us not suspect why, as, since his day, such a mode of wearing vests has become fashionable) to his chin. Round his neck was loosely tied a tattered silk-handkerchief, stuffed with some uncouth kind of wadding, into the shape—perhaps not unaptly prophetic—of a thick halter. His

rusty hat, much too capacious for its chance wearer, had been prevented from falling over his eyes by a contrivance that invariably gives a peculiar and finished air of vagabondism to its adopter,—namely, the filling up, with a truss of rags, the superfluous space between the forehead and the inner edge of the beaver.

On the little deal-table before him was a spacious sheet of paper, described at the top, in great red letters—"The New London Sheet Lottery." It was divided into square compartments, each of which contained a number; and beneath every number might be deciphered either a certain sum, by way of prize, or the much more frequently occurring "blank, blank, blank:"—the former printed in red, the latter in mourning black; as if the meaning of the word could not sufficiently distinguish it, or sufficiently distress a loser. In a tin vessel, bulged, battered, and bent, the result of many spirited or despairing knocks against the table, he rattled a set of dice, eight or nine in number, fabricated without any attention to uniformity of size or shape,—one being oblong, another nearly triangular, another inclined to a spherical form, but none exactly square; and so contrived, no doubt, in order to be managed to good advantage by the proprietor, and, in a decrease ratio, by occasional amateurs.

As he continued to rattle these dice in their curious tin box, the bold knave still growled forth—(for, as has been mentioned, all clearness of voice was gone, by constant exercise)—"It's on the sheet, an' it's on the dice, I tell ye!—whoo! rowl in! there's the getherin' o' three pounds for the beggarly pinnies! What's the matther wid ye? Tundher-an'-turf! an' tundher-an-ages!" He gesticulated most extravagantly, and flourished his rattling box about his head, and then thumped it down, as he went on: "My heavy curse stick to ye all like wax! is there no courage among ye, at all at all?"

But there seemed to be a stagnation of the gambling disposition among his audience; chiefly owing, perhaps, to the ill-success which, in their own persons, or those of their friends, had attended late speculations. "Hould up, here!" suddenly elevating his shoulders and arms, to get rid of some who pressed upon him: "hould up, ye *beg-avaw* * thiefs; is there none o' ye has the *spuddoch*, I say agin? Ah! *mecnauya!* † my shame be upon ye, every mother's son! A poor man an' a coward, the saints above hates—so they do! Here's the money wrastlin' for the bare life in my pocket below, wantin' to see which o' ye comes out first, an' no one 'ill

* Good for nothing. † A term of contempt.

give it a chance! Take a throw, ould daddy!" lowering his voice, as he suddenly addressed a withered greybeard, and stooped across the table to catch him by the lapel of the coat.

The old fellow gave a smile of denial, that half-pretended to know "a thing better," and half had a silly expression.

"Take a throw, daddy;—I'll call you my daddy, because you're ouldher nor me; an', by the piper! a purty little ould man, too! I wish I had such a clane ould daddy, in thrue arnest! Take;—my sowl to glory! bud I'm for your good"—

The sire still smiled and shook his head.

"Do—just a throw! you'll win! Come, your sowl!—You won't? Well, then, take a throw for nothin'."

This proposal was accepted: the old man took up the tin vessel.

"Rattle 'em well!" continued the orator; "thump their heads together, to warn 'em aforehand what you want." While speaking, he contrived to peep into the cannister:—"Down wid 'em now, my boy!" and he prompted the adventurer's hand to the action.

"That's your sort! that's id!—well done, ould daddy!—now, there's money on the faces iv 'em. Wait, a doochey-bit, *a-cuishla*," as the old fellow motioned to examine his venture, and all heads were poked down to witness the luck.

"It's myself won't let ye have it to say but I gave ye a chance. Is there ever a one to pay for the daddy's throw? there's the worth o' the money undher the can;—will *you* pay for the throw?" abruptly slapping the shoulder of a man with a round, pock-marked face, and large puffy eyes, who, his under-jaw dropped, stood gazing and gaping; and now he started, almost jumped aside, and looked frightened, at the suddenness and briskness with which he was addressed. And, "No—a—" he drawled out, "my mother didn't gi' me any laffenas, * comin' to see the sodgers, for fear I'd"—

"Go home, out o' this, to your mother, then, or I'll send you ridin' on a *thrawneen* wid the fairies, for a year an' a day."

"Oh—a—musha—a—oh—a—," said the person thus exhorted, as, in real alarm, he slowly withdrew from the cabalistic scene, to meet us, however, at another time and place.

"Hah! hah!" laughed the master of the ceremonies, "I done for that *ownshuck*. Pay for the throw?" now speaking to a smart-looking lad opposite to him.

"You're too great a rogue, Rattlin' Bill. There's neither loock nor grace near the ground you stand on."

* Halfpence

"Only it's not the way wid me," retorted Bill, "to be callin' poor people, like you, out o' their names, I'd say *you* were an honest boy. Will nobody pay for the throw? Daddy, be your own friend, pay for it yoursef."

"Didn't you give the throw for nothin' at all?" questioned daddy.

"Och! to be sure I did: and didn't you take it for the same price?" pushing his jeering face close to that of the querist. But, to give the chance o' money for the nothin' that the Connaughtman shot at,—that's a horse of another colour, ould daddy. Come, take your own gorçoon's advice, an' pay for the loock;—you won't? Well, remember, I gave the offer."

His oratory availed nothing; but, in the very critical moment of confirmed caution of him and his tin box, a ragged fellow, whose knee rested on a wooden-leg, while the proper member poked out at full length behind, stumped and bustled his way to the table. "Come," he said, assuming the most innocent of guileless smiles, and having shoved up his bulged hat for the purpose, he applied his fingers behind his ear, "come, I'll thry my loock. Who knows, by dad! but a poor boy that's in the want of it, 'ud have gain comin' to him. Sure, we'll have the good will o' the neighbours on our side any way;" and he modestly looked for an assurance into the faces of those around him.

"Our good-will is all you'll have for your money," said one.

"By my conscience!" remarked another, "a dhrop o' liquor to warm your heart 'ud be betther for you than the rattlin' o' the cannisther, in regard o' your good threepence."

There was a loud, assenting laugh. The adventurer looked dubious, holding his pence between his finger and thumb.

"Pitch 'em all to the *dhunnus*," said Rattling Bill, snatching the threepence.

"Give us our money," whined the fellow.

"Not a rap farth'n," answered Bill, pushing the cannister to his hand.

"Well, here goes, at any how," again assuming his innocent smile.

He threw and won sixpence. Agreeing to take two casts more, in lieu of his prize, he still rattled the dice. His last venture entitled him to four shillings.

"That's wrong!" exclaimed Bill; "a wrong throw by ——! I won't give into it."

"Och! boys, boys! don't see a poor crature sarved this way. I have but the one leg, boys!" appealed the man with the wooden member to the lookers-on.

"Pay him his winnin's, Bill!" cried a voice.

"Not as mooch as a *keenogue*,"* said Bill.

"You must down wid it!" added many interested voices.

"Gi' me my own, you rogue o' the world," whimpered the cripple.

"It's you is the born thief," retorted Bill.

"Come, pay the poor crature his money!" exhorted an athletic lad, frowning ominously on the owner of the dice. The crowd prepared to second him in a mere act of justice.

"Here, ye robbers," at last said Bill, thrusting his hand into his pocket, "ye shan't have it to say that I hung my ears for four shillin's,—no, by the piper! nor if they war pounds. Here, you Divil's darlin'!" and he grinned into the face of the winner. "Here! an' that your other leg may turn out sthraight afore you, the same as the one behind, just as to have you aqu'l at the two sides!"

"By dad!" replied the other, smiling and winking on the crowd, as he turned the money over and over in his hand:—"By dad! them that loses is welcome to be cranky, an' why not, remember'in' the ould sayin', for them that wins? So we'll say good by to you, *a-vich*, while we're well off." And Rattling Bill's accomplice, with whom, as well as his respectable principal, we are doomed to have much to do, stumped through the throng, nodding and smiling, and exhibiting his very considerable gains.

The bait took. Upon witnessing the indisputable good fortune of the wooden-legged hero, many again ventured. But blank, blank, was the successive recurrence for every throw.

Eliza had perceived that almost as soon as, to indulge her father's humour rather than her own taste, and indeed to avoid scrambling through the outer mob, she had stopped opposite the gambling-table, the presence of the "gentlefolk" was observed by Rattling Bill. Yet, after the quick glance that gave him his information, the master of the dice seemed unconscious of their proximity: and this appearance he for some time well supported.

But, during some of his most vehement gesticulation or rhodomontade, and while employed in his knavish business, our heroine afterwards caught the man's eye stealthily fixed on her's, with an expression of maliciousness, joined to its rude familiarity, which rendered it peculiarly disagreeable. As the scene of his triumphant rascality proceeded, his glances, always cautiously and cleverly ventured whenever the eyes of Sir Thomas and Sir William were turned away, became more bold: Eliza was at length about to urge

* An imaginary coin—half a farthing.

her father to leave the spot, at any risks, when a new occurrence suspended her intention.

After innumerable repetitions of the doleful word "blank," the crowd, of whom the greater portion had, by this time, been losers, began to wax suspicious and discontented: and one, who, instead of his anticipated prize, nay of his lost threepence, had just heard the hated sound, grew restive. He could not read; but he took it upon himself to affirm, that the number he had last thrown was the same upon which the wooden-legged man arrived at wealth, for the day. Some thought he was right, others knew he was wrong, yet, in revenge for their own losses, gave judgment against Bill. In this dilemma, the bated juggler appealed "to the gintlemen;" now for the first time, seeming aware of the presence of the two Baronets.

The group immediately round the table turned to ascertain to whom the reference had been made, and recognising Sir Thomas, they, with much officious deference, opened their circle to admit the arbitrators.

Sir Thomas, smiling to find himself thus appointed by acclamation to dispense "even-handed justice" in so curious a case, stepped to the table. Overstrained condescension was, perhaps, one of the faulty traits in his character, although it caused him to be idolized by the people in his neighbourhood; and, in this view, might be supposed to minister to his pride better than a more lofty and distant demeanour. If at any time reminded of his foible, he showed a degree of ill-temper to which he was, in all other circumstances, a stranger. Eliza, accustomed since childhood to observe her only parent, knew all these facts; and her recollection of the latter would not permit her to draw back, even as her father advanced more closely towards the person whom she thought there was some reason she should avoid.

"Now hould your clattherin' tongues, ye set o' sprissauns," said Rattling Bill. Sir Thomas promptly informed the demurring loser, that the number thrown was indeed a blank.

"Well," said the discomfited though now acquiescing lad, "any honest body's word 'ud do wid me, not to talk of your honour's, in the place o' that kiln-dried rogue fornent you; for, as sure as there is a place below," pointing downward, "a place that we won't call by its name, out o' regard to your honour, an' the young misthress, God bless her! ould Nick 'ill be rattlin' dice in his skull yet, if he doesn't chate the bouchal of his bargain, as he chates the rest o' the world."

"Ay," replied Bill, not so choice of his language, "when he's throwin' for bad sowls on red-hot griddles, wid sinner's burnt kilty-bones in the place o' the nath'r'l dice. An' then, if he doesn't win *you*, at the first offer, *nawbocklish**—that's all."

"For one crooked sthraw, I'd send you to him sooner nor ye both bargained for!" retorted the vexed loser; and he clenched his cudgel, and looked ferociously at Rattling Bill.

"Be quiet, my good lad," said Sir Thomas Hartley, laying his hand on his arm; "you must not proceed to violence."

"Then he ought to be down on his knees, prayin' for your honour, if he hasn't forgot to do the like. By the stick in my hand! I'd put him in a way that wouldn't let him be chatin' the country-boys agin."

The wrathful youth withdrew as he said this, now and then turning his head over his shoulder to look his postponed purpose at the indifferent person he threatened. Then he took up a new position, a little outside the inner circle, chafing and muttering, and, with many idle graspings of his shillelah, repeating, for his own satisfaction, what he would do "if his honour wasn't to the fore."

"Come, boys!" resumed Rattling Bill, almost as soon as his last hostile word had been uttered, now assuming a very jovial look and tone. He was about to proceed with some new matter, when Sir Thomas and his party turned from the table.

"Your honours," he then went on imploringly, "don't go till ye just see this. Your handsome young honour, look here!" addressing Sir William; "maybe, you'd like to thry it yourself. I'm goin' to ax the poor boys to take a throw that 'ill tell their fort'ns. Come, gorçoons—No charge—the loock in store for some o' ye wouldn't be worth payin' for—I'll tell any boy among ye, the colleen that 'ill be his own yet.—Who'll take a throw to know aforehand, the plagne that 'ill stick to him all the days of his life? Will *you?*" holding the divining cannister to a strippling near him.

"No," said Sir William, who had turned round in good humour at Bill's personal appeal; "give it to the lad by your side. I know *him*, and should like to judge of your prophetic powers in a case where it is not likely you have prepared the person to prophesy for himself."

"Wid all my heart," readily assented Bill. "Here, avich, take it—rattle 'em well—now! that's it—" as the lad smote the table—"again to it!"—another throw was given—"Whoop! thry your hand the third hait—third an' last settles it for you."

* Never mind.

The third throw accordingly ensued. The knave consulted the dice a moment.

"Now, hould your ear, *a-hagur*. He whispered the youth, who, at his first word, started and stared upon him in half fearful amazement, while the conjuror returned his gaze with a leer of self-satisfied cunning. In a few seconds, the lad became aware of the confessing state of feeling he had exhibited, and, making an awkward attempt to dissimulate, blushed to the eyes, as he stammered out—"But you're wrong now—You didn't guess it."

"What colour is red?" queried Bill, sinking his head towards him, and using a confidential tone, loud enough, however, for his purposes.

The stripling made no reply, but, blushing again, dropped his chin on his breast, and seemed consulting the toes of his brogues.

"Don't be afeard o' me!" resumed Bill.—"Keep your sacret, an' it's all between yoursef an' mysef." The fidgets, and continued silence of the detected lover, belied his former words, and told that Bill had made a true hit.

"Won't you thry your hand, neighbour?" continued the juggler to another present. The same ceremony was gone through, as much on the part of the adventurer, for the pleasure of rattling the dice in the noisy tin box, and of thumping the table with it, as from any serious calculations on the results. Again, however, Bill whispered this second candidate for knowledge of the future.

"Who the Duoul tould you that?" questioned the young rustic, in sudden alarm.

"Who tould me? Don't you see it on the dice?"

The lad looked as if a secret of vital importance, which he had believed no one but himself and the powers above and below were aware of, had just been whispered in his ear.

Our party were again retiring.

"Won't your young honour thry your own loock?" asked Bill of Sir William.

"Some other time, perhaps," answered the Baronet good-humouredly.

"But the handsome young lady, won't she?" Eliza shook her head in cold dissent. Bill briskly wheeled round the table, with the conjuring cannister in his hand, and confronted her.

"Just touch your lily hand upon it, an' we'll throw for you. 'Twill do as well."

Our heroine looked haughtily offended. Sir Thomas glanced among the peasants, and observing that they seemed gleeish'

expect the condescension, whispered—"Touch it, my love. if only to get rid of the mountebank, and please those poor people."

Thus exhorted, Eliza complied. Bill was at his table again in a moment. Our friends would not wait to witness the result of his divination; but, as they made way through the now yielding crowd, Eliza heard him shake the ill-fashioned bones in the vessel, and then thump it down three times, as in the former cases. She was not moving away from Bill with her back directly turned; and ere they quite lost sight of each other, her eyes involuntarily recurred to the place where he remained. Standing upright over the table, and with one finger resting among the scattered dice, as if he had just summed up their pretended prediction, she found the fellow looking at her more expressively than before. Malignity, she thought, mixed with the bold, personal meaning of his glance; and Eliza felt some terror and much disgust at its expression. Yet, in a fit of fascination, similar to that which causes the lonely boy, in his quaking journey through the midnight dell, to rivet his eye intensely on the bush his fears have shaped into some fearful form, she could not immediately withdraw her gaze from the look that thus agitated her. During the few seconds she continued fixed by it, its disagreeable character increased, or Eliza's fancy made her think so.

Having passed the outskirts of the throng, and lost all view of her insolent tormentor, our heroine shook off these sensations, however, and brought herself to consider them as both unbecoming and silly.

CHAPTER VII.

We proceed to perform our engagement of accompanying the reader along the martial line drawn out for his inspection. Its right was composed of horse. To the extreme right were two troops of heavy dragoons; the remainder were yeoman cavalry.

The dragoons were able-bodied men, whose helmets shaded brows of menace and of daring purpose. Their attention to the exhibition, nay, to the exaggeration of person deemed necessary to impress beholders with an idea of prowess, and their minute observance of uniformity of costume, bespoke the soldier by profession. Their well-burnished accoutrements, disposed with fastidious regularity, gave an

imposing idea of readiness for combat. As they sat in their saddles, erect and motionless, it seemed the situation for which they had been created; so much "pride of place," and such grave self-possession did they exhibit. The noble steeds they bestrode, proud to bear such burdens, switched their long, shining tails, or pawed the turf, to express their wish for movement, yet stirred not from their positions:—their strength and power were altogether at the disposal of those who had acquired habitual sway over their slightest will and motion.

Whatever may be the practical value of a well-disciplined column of infantry, the appearance of a warrior, thus mounted on his curveting war-horse, is immeasurably beyond that of the foot-soldier. His proud mastery over his charger, and the picture of both, dashing like one high-souled animal into the roar of battle, give a lofty idea of human power. And influenced, perhaps, by such an idea, the greater number of the yeoman force under our eye were caparisoned as cavalry. But here other reasons might have guided the preference. A man who could furnish himself with a battle-horse, was palpably a person of more consideration than the mere pedestrian servant of his country. At a first and inexperienced glance, too, there seemed less of fatigue in military evolutions performed by one's horse, instead of oneself. Again, if the man of impetuous courage could be borne into the combat with velocity equal to his daring, it may have prudently occurred to other cavaliers, that on the retreat, the united efforts of man and horse have a manifest superiority over the soldier who can only run away on foot.

The yeomanry corps, next to the regular dragoons, was one to which precedence was yielded, in consequence of its appearance, and of the consideration of those who mostly filled its ranks. They were, indeed, generally speaking, men of property, who bore, in their new guise of soldiers, the characteristics of their civil rank in life. The young fellows amongst them had succeeded in convincing their fair friends, whether sisters or mistresses, that the helm sat gallantly on their foreheads:—white palms were often clasped together in admiration of their air, as they vaulted into the saddle, while older ladies looked beamingly through their spectacles, at the manly forms now diligently displayed in new attire, and at the dashing deportment which a change of calling suggested as necessarily in character. As these gallant patriots strutted to the fireside, and boldly flourished their flashing blades, eyes, of which the beams, like the lightnings of those same polished weapons, were but the harbingers of a death wound, would close in mock terror, of the

impending blow. There is even authority for adding that, in many cases, suits which had been but coolly received at an every-day civil pleading, were promptly ceded to the courageous *accolade* of the yeoman.

The post next in honour was occupied by the mounted and armed citizens of Wexford: some, gentlemen of independence, more or less; some, the more respectable traders of the town. The former description of persons rode good serviceable steeds, and not a few amongst them were mounted in gallant show, filled their saddles with habitual ease and confidence, and altogether put on the warrior with excellent military assumption. Many of the trading folk also boasted sleek horses, and were well accoutred and caparisoned; but contrast and variety might on a closer observation be noticed. Paunches that used to inconvenience the wearers on foot, rested comfortably against the soft bearskin of the holsters. White locks were cumbered with a heavy headpiece, which threw its stern shade over features of much pacific Christian endurance; and "shrunk shanks," that but half filled the heroic boot, rendered a horse necessary to enable the loyal old man to prove his principles in the field. Indeed, such an individual, riding about under the serious fardel of his accoutrements, supported his cause rather by self infliction for its sake, than by any very effectual work he could be supposed to do amongst its enemies.

Passing this corps, many others may be massed together who were composed of the most respectable of the middle classes of the neighbouring villages, or of the most wealthy among the Protestant gentlemen farmers: generally speaking, each was commanded by the chief landed proprietor of a district. And to such corps attached the character of respectable appearance, notwithstanding that, in some instances, little gallantry of attire, or little glitter of weapons or accoutrements, fascinated the eye of a beholder. The casque might press firmly down, without adorning the head it defended: and the feather, astray of its proper smart erectness, might droop backward or forward. Yet there was a soldierly expression about the men which recommended them to notice. They looked as if they had mounted their serviceable horses for something beyond the purposes of display. If they sat ungracefully in their saddles, one could judge they would hold their places firmly; and that the rust of the scabbard would not hinder from smiting bitterly with the blade it preserved for no holiday purpose.

The majority of inferior country corps, raised among the very lowest orders, by some obscure zealot, whose new title of captain

was his first earthly dignity, looked as if they had pushed this feeling into fierce or stern excess. In fact, along with the untrained state of passion incidental to their general habits, they brought into the field the darkest religious prejudice. The darkest we say, for they could not enlighten themselves, much less others, with an account of why they hated; perhaps, not even with "an account of the faith that was in them;" antipathy to the prevailing creed of the country often forming the greater portion of their own.

In military outfit they were as imperfect and as shabby as in mental order. Uncombed locks strayed, along with glances not of the gentlest expression, from beneath the peak of the helm; their jackets were soot-stained, their uncleansed and smoke-dried boots crippled up knees unused to such control—indeed, in some instances, worsted hose were the only defence the leg could boast. Very often a single rusty spur served the unbooted cavalier, who, however, might vindicate his omission of the other, upon the principle of a certain well-reasoning poet, according to whom, if one side of a horse be compelled to travel, its fellow will not lag behind. And their untrained, shaggy steeds stood under them, spiritless and inert, drowsily enjoying, with closed eyes and necks poked downward, the "stand at ease," allowed before the arrival of the General. Not a whit puffed up did they seem at the new and ennobling service they were called to fill: not a whit transformed, in spirited imaginings, into chargers, merely because a very rusty scabbard chafed against their ribs.

Our inspection of the infantry now commences. The military heading its line were only part of a regiment quartered in the county: they were attended, however, by a band.

Many will recollect that, at the time we treat of, the dressing of a soldier's head, for parade or review, was the business of a morning. Powder and pomatum should have been the ingredients used at his toilet, but the private's scanty pay obliged him to substitute flour and soap. A compost of these matters having been abundantly mixed with the hair, he combed his locks at either side into two goodly *chevaux-de-frize*, leaving at top a *tête-toupée;* the whole much resembling, in miniature, a fortress on a hill, defended by lower outworks. But this was not all. The soldier further wore half way down his back, a queu, a tail long enough for many among the monkey tribe; while the grenadier displayed between his brawny shoulders, an iron-bound packing box, containing, or supposed to contain, hair, of the polishing and adjusting of which he was bound to be as careful as of his more valuable accutrements. There was

some sense, though of a tardy growth, in the order that dispensed with these curious appendages to manhood and soldiership; and at the time of its promulgation, a punster did not lose the opportunity of observing that, in any future affray, the soldiers of his Britannic Majesty could never again "turn tail."

Upon the review-field our militia marched into line without a hair awry. Their casques, half-way between the succeeding cap and the horseman's helm, sat precisely above the *chevaux-de-frize*. In all other respects, too, they showed like soldiers of that day. Coats, belts, pouches, white small-clothes, and tight black leggings, glittering with buttons, were spruce and debonnair. The sun flashed from the polished barrels of their muskets; the prim feathers stood perpendicularly in their caps; their chins rested easily on their stocks.

But we cannot yield to these men more praise than that excited by their outward show of discipline. In habits and conduct, as soldiers, they had been debauched, and were a part of the force previously described by Abercrombie as "licentious and disorderly."

Called to conflict, soon after they were embodied, not against equal foes, from whom the danger to be expected in attack renders necessary a systematized courage, but against nightly insurrectionists, who fled from regular contests, and who were to be put down by piecemeal vengeance, they had acquired, perhaps as a matter of course, notions of military service destructive of discipline. In the particular instance before us, sectarian hatred gave energy to this half-bandit feeling. In the name of God, as well as in the name of the King, cabins were razed, and, sometimes, the unresisting peasant met the fate of a resisting one, without much danger incurred, on the part of the slayer, of being called to account for the accident.

As the yeoman cavalry of Wexford took the post of honour near the regular dragoons, so the yeoman infantry of that town stood next to the militia.

It has before been hinted, that many soldiers from the town of Wexford allowed themselves to be enrolled for his Majesty's service, rather to give a proof of their loyalty, of which readiness to take up arms was the test, than on account of any great liking they felt for the new profession, or indeed any fitness they displayed for the hot struggle of the battle-field. This remark will hold particularly good for the corps now passing under inspection. We remember one, at least, amongst them, who bore his musket strictly in this sense, and in this only. He was content to give the demon-

stration of principles required by putting on a red coat, and endeavouring to learn, late in life as it was to begin, the theory of a soldier's trade; but of any step beyond this, he never entertained a notion. He attended drill as punctually as he opened his shop. But when his corps was sent to shoot at a target—a memorable one, which had served for a whole month's practice, and was but little injured at the end of the campaign,—he never cared to put ball-cartridge into his piece, nor could exhortation or threat compel him to do so. "Me!" he cried—"is it me?—Not I, upon my word and credit. How do I know but I might hurt some one?"

And another occurs to our recollection, who, after he had feelingly bidden his children adieu, would issue forth to the day's duty, with a face of studied quietness that seemed to say to all beholders: "Although I carry this musket, let no man fear injury from me."

Yet, we should admit that the front rank of this corps boasted a majority of well-dressed, well-looking soldiers, who did much credit to their native town. But they served as a screen to a number of uncouth figures in the rear; men, such as we have sketched, with so much of themselves in advance, that, at the word "close order," when they imagined they took up only one pace of ground, their covering files were pushed out of line; and other feeble wights, who literally tottered under their muskets, and took but little pride, and derived but little enjoyment, from the vain pageantry in which they were compelled to bear a part.

The corps we shall next pause to notice, was also from the county town, but of inferior caste to the former honourable company, being composed of working mechanics, or persons not of trade or business, who held with them the same social rank. The first-mentioned brought into the field the several characteristic marks of their several occupations, by which, in civil attire, they might easily be distinguished from each other. The Butcher handled his musket as if it had been a cleaver; the Carpenter as if it had been a saw; the Blacksmith, as if it had been a sledge; the barber's muscular calves betrayed him; the pale, hard-worked, and melancholy visage of the weaver was not to be mistaken; and no previous drilling of a Sunday, in the church-yard, by their Serjeant, who was parish-clerk, (with the organist for Lieutenant, and the lawyer for Captain,) could invigorate the loose-kneed Tailor, or give alertness to the Nailer's swoollen extremities.

In closing our walk of inspection with a few general glances at the whole yeomanry force, it may be said that, in very many other instances, men looked or dressed themselves exactly in keeping

with their original civil characters. The snug and sober small farmer donned his cap, distinguished rather than adorned by the waving feather, in the same fashion that he used to wear his domestic hat: —a fashion which caused his ears to protrude like tiny wings, while it covered his neck behind. He contrived, too, to put on his military coat in the identical way he had, for twenty or thirty years, put on his loose frieze suit; and, while plodding to the field, his pouch thumped stoutly behind him, as if it had been a pair of saddle-bags, and his musket lolled over his shoulder like a flail. He still retained, too, the air of homely seriousness, that, in less perilous times, he constantly exhibited when, of a harvest morning, he eyed the firmament to seek early prognostics of the weather.

Nor did the parish-clerk, a character often occurring in the yeomanry ranks, lose the chilly mien of decency which piety and an empty church had long inflicted upon him: nor the parish schoolmaster his pedagogue severity of brow, now so useless where he was himself a pupil, and not an apt one either; nor the petty shopkeeper his sidelong or downward look of calculation, by which at its first assumption, he would fain have it concluded he was a man who could buy and sell at proper seasons.

Our parting glance recognises the fact, that the yeoman cavalry, along with being the most numerous of the half-volunteer force, made, on the whole, a much better figure than their infantry fellow-soldiers. It should, however, be added, that upon the day of real service, which soon followed, they were found of little use, and suffered the mortification of being eclipsed, to a certain degree, by the men whom they now outshone. Indeed, if any of the yeomanry of Ireland could lay claim, in the subsequent contest, to a sprig of laurel, it was earned exclusively by the shabbiest and most unwashed of the foot-companies that have passed under our eye; by men, whose old corderoy or frieze small-clothes, clumsy worsted stockings, and broken foot-gear, denied them, from the waist downwards, all seeming right to the name of soldiers. Nay, a leaf of the above-mentioned sprig may be awarded to corps called Supplementary, (we were ashamed to notice them before,) whose only outward pretensions to that high-sounding title came from their having dingy cross-belts huddled over their smeared working attire, and dusty muskets on their shoulders. But hereditary prejudices fitted such men better than fine clothes could have done, for the unhappy cause which called them out of their obscure abodes, to deal life or death throughout the land. And although, upon this

review day, they clutched their weapons awkwardly, a close observer might predict that, under less formal circumstances, they were persons who would ram the cartridge home, pull the trigger with unshaken nerve, and blach not at the sight of blood, whether shed in the battle-field, or at the lonely road-side.

CHAPTER VIII.

"A flourish, trumpets! beat, alarum drums!"

The veteran general has at length arrived, and, in obedience to some such command as is contained in our quotation, his welcome is sounded on the brazen trumpets of the dragoons to the right, and by an imposing burst of martial music from the band at the head of the militia infantry. "Attention!" echoes, in tones of high command, from one officer to another along the line; and no voices shout the word louder than those of the yeoman captains. All put on their best appearance for the first glance of the general's eye. And if there be some jostling and confusion among certain corps, and some under-breath growls against them by the drilling officers, let us not be hypercritical, but rather admit that all managed as well as they could. Even the old commander, while he looked with an eye of steady, frowning scrutiny on the regular troops, smiled indulgently on the essay of the others. We fear, indeed, the smile occasionally amounted to the more palpable expression of merriment, while some individuals caught his notice.

He had ended his observation of the line, and assumed his place in its front, when Sir Thomas Hartley thought there was a good opportunity to address him on the subject which had brought him to witness the inspection.

The Baronet's salutation was politely received, and his complaint attentively listened to: and as he pourtrayed the acts of aggression for which he sought reasonable redress, the veteran glanced sternly towards that part of the line against which the facts were stated.

"Order Major Danby of the — Dragoons to advance," he said, abruptly turning to his aid-de-camp; and while the officer galloped across the field to obey the command, he addressed Sir Thomas Hartley.

"I have heard, Sir, upon my route, but too many circumstances

like those you relate:—I am sorry to say my ears are sickened with them!—A complaint is preferred against your men, Sir," speaking to the Major of Dragoons, who had now come up—a complaint which I am very sorry to hear."

"I am ignorant, General, of any censure which can rest upon my people; they are loyal subjects, and brave soldiers in his Majesty's cause."

"And, yet," said Sir Thomas Hartley, "Major Danby will be good enough to recollect, that I have already submitted, for his consideration, more than one charge against them, little creditable to soldiers,—which, however, he did not choose to examine."

"Sir Thomas Hartley alludes to some very trivial matters," replied the officer;—"accidents happening when the King's troops had to deal with disguised rebels—as all the fellows hereabout are known to be."

"Sir," returned the old General, warmly, "I can no more assent to the justice of your summary mode of argument, than I can countenance the proceedings it would defend. A man's claims to bravery become doubtful when he acts tyrannically, or when he lavishes his force without dreading retalliation. Your men, Sir, will not mature their valour in such a school; and I am ashamed that soldiers should so nearly act the parts of banditti, as to terrify, by the bravado of weapons, the passive and defenceless. Such conduct, Sir, has a manifest tendency still more to alienate the people from us, and from the King and cause we serve; and if it is not a palliation for defection, a single friend can, assuredly, never be gained by it. Attend me at my quarters, Major Danby, after the inspection; and you, Sir Thomas Hartley, will also favour me with your company; when, so far as is possible, amid this general want of discipline, I will see justice done to your tenants."

He bowed his head, as a signal for terminating the interview. The Major slowly rode back to his corps, but not before he had fixed an expressive look on his accuser. Sir Thomas, proudly returning his stare, joined his daughter and her lover.

The Baronet had scarce disposed himself anew to attend to the progress of the review, when his interest, as well as that of Eliza and Sir William, and, obviously of the General, was engaged by the approach to the latter, of a strange horseman. This was a person advanced in years, tall, gaunt, his head partially covered with a black hunting-cap, his coat, like that of a dragoon soldier, but much tattered, as also were his soiled leather small-clothes, and his jack-boots.

By some chance, his spurs had erred from his heels midway up his leg, but with them, even in such a situation, he continually gored the sides of a stout horse, on which he was mounted, and which he pushed straightforward toward the General, as if about to tilt with him. Not that he held his saddle, indeed, with the erect vigour of a knight of yore; on the contrary, at every plunge of his steed, he shook from side to side, like one about to fall,—contriving, however, still to avoid the ground, with the pertinacious instinct of one accustomed to every predicament of horsemanship.

As the General looked on in amazement at his furious career, and while our friends expected to see it end in a sudden shock between them, the knight, arrived at speaking distance, suddenly threw himself back in his saddle, pulling at the reins with all his strength, while his long legs pushed forward nearly to a level with the horse's neck. By this masterly movement the animal became so instantaneously and vigorously checked, that he almost fell back on his haunches. His master, too, all but tumbled over the crupper; then, with something of the reaction of an overstrained bow, came forward again thump against the pummel; then assumed a tolerably upright position. Finally, he pulled off, in flourishing soldierly style, his huntsman's cap, and looking as if confusedly full of some momentous matter, began, out of breath, an effort at articulation. But his tongue did not promptly act its usual part,—two or three words only escaped, much thickened, and after having suffered much elision: it became visible that he was in that delicious state which transforms the beggar into as great a personage as the king.

"Plaise—your—honour"—he stuttered.

"Well, Sir?" questioned the General.

The cavalier paused, drew in his breath with a long wheezing gasp, expelled it in as long a groan, gulped it down again, and at last said, still very disjointedly—

"Plaise your honour, won't you excuse the poor Bally-bree-hoone Cavalry?"

"State your business more clearly, Sir," answered the General, puzzled to understand his meaning.

"The poor Bally-bree-boone cavalry," continued the courier. "They'd come, and they'd be here;" still waving his cap, as once more he wavered from side to side. "An' they'd take up their ground the first o' the field, an' they'd show a patthern 'ud take the light from your eye,—Gineral,—not like them garron-killers, beyant.—An' they'd charge! ay, in stylo!"—and he darted spurs into his horse, and pushed him forward until his nose and that of

the animal raised by the General came in contact, at which the commander cried back—"Ye, by the great Saizor!" (Caesar—"to the right, wheel. To the left, wheel." He tugged his steed rapidly through what he deemed the evolutions answering to the commands, till the animal seemed chasing his own tail;—and, to crown, the knight returned to his position.—"Won't your hooour, you plaise, sir, I'll be much obliged to you, excuse the poor Bally bree-hoome Cavalry."

"Certainly," said the General; "now that I comprehend you Sir, I am quite willing to excuse the Bally—— what do you call them?"

"The poor Bally-bree-hoome Cavalry, General; an' you don't know the raysons. The curtin' finn's cause—oh! my heavy curse on them tailorin' sheers! Fog 'em, General; flog 'em wid their own needles, welded together into a cat-o'-nine-tails."

"Your business is ended, I think, Sir."

"Och! my poor Bally-bree hoome boys! Will they stand excused, your honour?"

"They do, Sir—they do."

The intercessor made a profound bow over his horse's neck, put on his cap, filed off, pulled up half-way across the ground, and returned at a renewed charge, only to prefer his old request.

"Force that man back," said the General to an attendant dragoon. The command was instantly obeyed. The dragoon's sword flourished terrifically round his head, and its flat often visited his shoulders ere he could be brought to comply with the orders issued with regard to him. Again he forgot that his corps had been "excused," and could only think of asking the dragoons to intercede for him and them with the General. Still bewailing to himself the hard fate of the Bally-bree-hoome cavalry, the man at last left him at a side of the field, where he was shortly surrounded by a crowd of mischief-loving boys from the town of Wexford, who, after listening with mock gravity to his accusations against the tailors, contrived a series of torments for him. One pulled a leg, another its fellow; another twitched his skirt till he thought it was torn off; until, at length, he charged amongst them, crying out—"Quit, ye sons o' thiefs! or, by the great Saizor, I'll gallop over ye!" Scarcely did he succeed, however, in scattering his urchin foes, ere they again cautiously approached to renew the contest.

Meanwhile, much bustle went on along the line. The word was given for forming into subdivisions, and roared successively by each

commander to his men. Before the better description of yeoman cavalry horses could be constrained to form properly, much capering and prancing, and frequent assaults upon each other, ensued between them. Among the inferior classes of animals, hard tugging with one side of the bridle, and many sore inflictions of the rusty spur, were found necessary to force them, in any kind of regularity, into their positions; and in some cases, which came under our own eye, a downright refusal on the part of the lazy beasts, put their crest-fallen masters *hors de combat.*

The yeoman infantry, though having to manage only their own legs, exhibited just as sad a state of confusion. We have seen a man, not even as self-possessed as tipsy Cassio, mistake his right for his left, and, when he supposed himself whirling into line, come thump against his neighbour; and then he insisted that right was not wrong, and, their noses poked into each other's faces, the comrades exchanged a curse or two before the mistake was corrected.

The business now to be done was that of taking a circuit of the field, and marching by the General, who kept his position about equidistant from its either end, and contiguous to a fence that opposed the line.

The dragoons came proudly forward, their horses tossing their heads, glaring war from beneath their brows, champing the bit in impatience of its restraint, and scattering in snowy patches over their chests the froth produced by the motion. The men looked haughtily conscious of their own appearance and of the power it implied, and, perhaps, were not unforgetful of the contrast, so much to their advantage, between them and their less regular brethren.

The principal yeoman cavalry corps pranced next, making a showy figure indeed; but the whole attention of the riders was concentrated in a continual effort to curb the metal of their holiday steeds, and keep them in something of an orderly pace. The others followed as well as they could; some gravely going the prescribed round as a matter of business, some as a matter of necessity, to be performed to the utmost of their power, and some as a penance full of inflictions. Among the rustic portion of the force, many animals proceeded in the only pace they knew,—excepting, indeed, their snail-like walk under the plough; the movement alluded to being accomplished by slinging one side forward, and then, leisurely and soberly, slinging the other after it. And their riders seemed to regard this as a very good pace to go to battle in,

and jogged on quite comfortably and smoothly, under, or rather over, a shaking that would have forced more fashionable horsemen to breathe hard at every jolt, with some anticipations of the state of the spine next morning.

The militia infantry went through the ordeal as became men who had made military evolution their business; and we profess that their appearance and bearing gave us much pleasure. The wealthy town infantry, next coming up, showed a good front-rank; but, as before noticed, this was only a screen to the greater portion of its rear, who, stumbling or tottering, perspired and groaned through their fatiguing march.

Behind the corps, his person erect as a poplar, and his legs pacing with mathematical precision, as he gave the exact "seventy steps for a minute," came its dreaded permanent Sergeant, "un Brave," who had seen much service, and borne the reputation of being the neatest soldier and best disciplinarian of his company. Loudly did he stamp against the hard, frozen sod, repeating in that kind of under-tone which will be distinct amid a shouting crowd, "right, left; right, left;" and this for the purpose of keeping his pupils upon their show day, or rather his pupils' feet, in concord and unison. But he often interrupted himself with exclamations, such as the following speech will exemplify :—

"Right, left; right, left; I say, Mr. Sanfey,—nations, Sir, why don't you mind?—Right, left; right, left;—Mr. Gorman, I wish, from my heart, your legs were in hospital:—Right, left;—I say, do you hear, Mr. Callahan?—body square to front—spring from haunch—stretch ham—and point toe, Sir.—Right, left—will you, I say, Sir—d—n it! will you?—Mr. Jenkins, front-rank man, are you about to ground arms, Sir? But to front groin, Sir—lock turned out, arm tight under cock, Sir—*under*, I say, not *over*, d—n it!—right, left."

The Captain of this remarkable corps was a man of goodly bulk, looking, at a first glance, fierce and formidable. But, under a close inspection, the knitting of his brows, the staring and rolling of his eyes, and the severe confusion of his lips, might hint inward fretfulness at the labour he was undergoing, joined with mortal fears of not being able to acquit himself creditably.

His sash had been unskilfully tied by some over tender hand, so as to save painful pressure to that precise circle of his prominence where the circumference was greatest, and below which was a very quick descent of diminished rotundity. The rapidity of his march unfortunately loosened from its resting-place the silken

badge of his rank, and first gradually, and at last precipitously, it fell down the descent. He had come to the General, at the head of his men; he had just called out "Present arms!" his corps was obeying the words with unusual felicity of movement; he was putting his hand to the peak of his cap, and carrying his sword to the salute—when suddenly the sash dropped to his heels, and at the next step he fell headlong upon the earth.

"As you were, Captain," cried a jocose member of his corps, using the term addressed to recruits, when it is intended to make them repeat a movement, in which, half-way, they have failed. With much exertion, and some assistance, the commander recovered his literal *faux-pas;* but considerable confusion resulted from it. Those behind him, ignorant of the occurrence, pressed too closely on each other; and those in advance of the prostrate Captain marched a considerable distance beyond their comrades.

These demurs were observed by the curious cavalier who had lately accosted the General in apology for the absence of his men, and who had since remained pretty nearly where the dragoon had placed him, alternately charging the tormenting boys, and in the pauses of the contest, bitterly bewailing the absence of the Ballybreehoone cavalry; who, if they could only have got "the clothin'," in time, from those villanous tailors, would, he was confident, have taken the right of the field that day, and shamed every corps he cast his eye upon.

When the accident just described became obvious to him—"Oh, murther!" he exclaimed, "what sodgers! look at 'em, now! Where's the Gineral, or what is he doin'?' and he deviated from his soliloquy, by roaring out at the top of his lungs—"Halt!" and there was a general halt in consequence.

"What is the meaning of this?" inquired the bewildered Commander. His attention was directed to the person who had usurped his privilege, and who now appeared galloping towards the advance of the force, waving his whip, and spurring his steed till the blood streamed down the poor animal's sides. Orders were given to secure his person, and two dragoons accordingly tilted in full gallop against him. But ere the parties met, he had reined up, faced the town corps, and, seeing he had in his first orders been so punctually obeyed, proceeded to issue additional commands; so that little violence was necessary to place him under arrest.

"Advance, division! hould fast, there!" he began; when the flat of a sword, now a second time applied to his shoulders, gave him to understand he was not the person he supposed himself

be; and farther discipline, together with a short explanation, convinced him he must relinquish his authority, and consider himself a prisoner. in the name of the General. As one who had a high notion of discipline, he bowed with grave submission to his important fate, and allowed himself to be quietly led back to the fence, where. until further orders, the dragoons guarded him, one at either side.

We would now represent the line as again formed, and the word given to fire. There was a greater variety in the discharge than is practised by more habitual professors of noise and fume. Some precipitately pulled the trigger the instant the musket came to the shoulder; others, either tardy from apprehension, or perhaps not at once able to distinguish the guard from the important little matter it inclosed, tugged stoutly at good steel that had not been intended to yield to a touch, and were therefore too late with their contributary shot; some who had missed fire at the first attempt, cocked, and tried again, careless about uniformity, so that the discharge was valiantly got over; and many, who were slow at priming and loading, fired singly, or did not fire at all. And all this time there was fantastic commotion among the horsemen to the right of the infantry; the spirited but untrained steeds jostled, intermingled, plunged, kicked, and sometimes bit each other; strong cart and plough-horses backed, or burst forward beyond all control. While the poor sorry "garrons," who bore the persons of the shabbiest of the cavalry force, showed a better example; for, not boasting even as much stamina as could be terror-stricken, they only shook their heads and stumps rather vehemently, to express their dislike of the noise.

But the wealthiest of our Wexford corps were fated to suffer most in the campaign of this eventful day.

One of the front rank—even of the front rank—was a prosperous man in trade, who, had his character for loyalty stood no chance of being impeached, would never have ventured to meddle with a weapon, dreadful to him almost from his cradle. At a very early age, indeed, a loaded blunderbuss accidentally lay in his way, and, without knowing what it was, he played with it till the infernal engine exploded, jumping out of his infant hands, and, with its butt, spinning him about the floor. Since that day he had shuddered at the sight of any instrument of its kindred. The panic never left him. But times arrived, in which he must either try to chase it out of his heart, or run the chance of being selected, by the keen eye of some informer, as a fit subject, already suspected, for a drum-head court-martial, and suspension by the neck, a few

minutes after, from the lamp-iron opposite to his own door. With many struggles, he therefore chose the lesser of the two evils, and became a yeoman.

During the terrors of the volley, this gentleman, thinking it sufficient that one of his senses should be outraged, kept his eyes closely shut while he "let off." The touch-hole of his musket had remained clogged since the apprentice, as part of his general work, last undertook to clean the weapon; it did not, therefore, explode, though in his agitation he thought it did. A second volley came on; he rammed a second cartridge over the first, and a second time falsely imagined he had with much impetuosity discharged his shot. A third volley was ordered—the third cartridge had been manfully added—and, congratulating himself on the success which had attended two fearful experiments, he once more dragged back the trigger. The whole contents of his piece now ignited at once, and, with a force that might make a castle totter, the musket recoiled against his neck, and then bounded from his grasp; he staggered from side to side, displacing his comrades at every movement, and finally fell backward with sufficient impetus to prostrate, along with himself, his rear-rank man.

This was surely enough; yet more injury was preparing for him. The *ci-devant* commander of the field, and sergeant of the Ballybreehoone cavalry, still kept in durance at the opposite fence, did not escape, notwithstanding the frowning presence of his dragoon-guardsmen, the persecution of the hardy imps, who had marked him as, at all hazards, fair game for the day. His horse's crupper was sufficiently near the fence, in his rear, to allow them to execute a new and deep-laid plan of annoyance. A bunch of furze was provided: two of them crept up the fence from an outer field; when one cautiously, but firmly, had tied it to the animal's tail, the other suddenly let the overstrained tail flap down; and the poor horse, who had no right to suffer for his master, as suddenly darted forward, terrified beyond self-control, and certainly beyond the control of the rider. So unexpected and furious was his first plunge, that he gained many yards in advance before even the dragoons spurred to chase him; and, right ahead did he sweep, his prickly annoyance still dangling behind, and increasing at every bound his fright and fury; right ahead, and straight across the field, to the first Wexford yeoman-infantry; in through the gap left in their front by the recent mishap; until, in trying to clear the prostrate Mr. Jenkins, one of the animal's hoofs struck his breast, just as he was recovering from his first fall, and

caused him a second and more dangerous overthrow. The pursuing dragoons avoiding, from a sense of humanity as well as of discipline, to charge after their fugitive through rank and file, now galloped along the line to its nearest end, in order, after clearing it, to recapture the prisoner. But this gave him an advantage in time, of which, now beginning to calculate his horse's unrestrainable speed in application to his own interests, he did not want tact to avail himself. Directing with spur and rein the still tortured animal to the lowest part of the fence, close behind the military line, one bound brought them both on the road towards home. The dragoons, aware that it had only been wished to keep him quiet in the field, saw no harm in letting him take his own way out of it; and the enfranchised trooper might be seen, for the very short time he remained within view, over the hedges, waving his black cap in exultation. For, though ignorant of the cause of his own mad speed, he took credit to himself for the brilliancy of his achievement; while those who were the promoters of his liberty and happiness, shouted in glee and admiration of the result of a prank meant for his discomfiture.

It was soon ascertained that the fallen soldier had sustained serious injury. He was unable to rise; and some, who had amused themselves with his first upset, assisted to bear him across the field, out of farther danger.

They deposited their burden near to the spot occupied by our party. Sir Thomas Hartley recognised, in the almost senseless campaigner, one with whom he had often dealt, and whose integrity he held in high esteem. Without such a recommendation, indeed, his nature would have urged him to lend assistance; yet the discovery quickened his zeal. He unclasped the choking stock, and was about consulting the state of the pulse, when a hoarse voice, not unfamiliar to his ears, or those of Eliza, growled out, near them—

"Bleed the crature—bleed him; or King George will have the loss of a bould sodger."

Eliza quickly recognised the proprietor of the gambling establishment, who, at their first coming into the field, had interested her father. Rattling Bill, nodding at Sir Thomas with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, continued in his jocular mood—

"Tundher-an'-turf, your honour! Dhraw the red puddle from his heart, or, by the piper, it 'ill put the rattles in his wizen."

"I believe you are right, my good fellow," replied Sir Thomas; "but where is the surgeon to perform the operation?"

"Near at hand, maybe," replied Bill; "just let myself at him—

an', by our own sweet conscience! if we don't let it out through his arm, or through the spot next his heart—if such was for his good—why, let him call me a botch of a bleedher, the next offer."

While Eliza walked away a few paces with Sir William, the conjuror thrust his hand into his pocket, and pulled up from among the dice, which were heard to rattle as he felt for it, a rusty lancet.

And—"Hah!" he laughed, beginning to brighten it, in some fashion, by moistening it with his breath, and then rubbing it with the skirt of his old soldier's coat—"Hah!—can I do it for him? Is there a handle to my face?"

Sir Thomas, reminded by these words of some risk to be run, said, "Have a care, my good fellow, that you understand this matter."

"I'll biggin wid your honour, if it's a thing that you have the laste fear o' me," answered Bill; "an', if I don't send your honour's good wine spoutin' half-way across the field, widout hurt or harum to you, I'll ate this sick sodger's wicked gun, jest to hindher him from killin' himself wid it once agin."

Sir Thomas, assured by the fellow's easy confidence, and also reflecting that by such persons the esteemed process of "bleeding" was at due seasons undertaken all over the country, often very uselessly, but always harmlessly, consented to employ him. And Rattling Bill, ordering one person to do one thing, and another to assist him, in a specified way, as if he had been the most regular and popular practitioner, evinced, by the manner in which he operated, that the business was no ways novel to him. He bandaged the arm, felt for the vein, and duly made his incision, if not very tenderly, at least very effectually. At first, indeed, the relieving stream came but slowly; but by skilful excitements of friction, it soon had vent.

"Look at that, now, your honour, wid both your eyes!" he boastfully exclaimed; then sinking his voice into a whisper, as he bent his head to a frieze-mantled Milesian—"the raal Protestan dhrop, by the piper!—as black as ink."

At the proper instant he staunched the hemorrage, as a licensed surgeon would say, though the present operator called it "pluggin' the leak."

"An' now," he went on, "this soft-fleshed poor crature might as well have no shanks to his body, when they're not able to hould him up. For the same rason, he must be lifted an' carried wherever he has to go; an' I'm sure your honour 'ill stand to me for my fee, now that the job is done in style-o."

"You have certainly got through your operation very well,

Doctor. Here is your fee. And, as you say, the gentleman must instantly be helped to my carriage, in which I will convey him to his own door, in the town of Wexford."

"Whoo! I pray that your honour may wondher at the loock you'll have," replied Bill, putting up the money, "an' that the time is comin' when you'll be kilt yourself, just to let me cure your honour. An' so we have only to lend a hand to this murtherin' sodger, that 'ud win a battle by himself, havin' no one to help him—an', divil thank him, when he'd shoot off four or five bullets at a time. Och! presarve us from such slaughterin' *roolachs!* Here, you sir," addressing a looker-on, "did you ever play 'Carry-my-lady-to-Lunnon?'—hands across, here—quit, you *bosthoon!*—that's not the way!—ay, now you have it—come, now, you terrible yeoman."

The wounded hero, placed on the seat formed by the crossed hands of Bill and his obedient assistant's, and his languid arms thrown over the necks of both, was borne to Sir Thomas's carriage; Bill stepping so as to humour a silly verse he sang out—one of those used to lull Irish children asleep, and, which, for its purpose, has a soothing, soporific air. It ran thus:—

"We will go,
Says the crow,
To Shaun-a-Gow's garden.
An' we will ate,
A gosh o' whate
In Shaun-a-Gow's garden," &c.

Sir Thomas Hartley and Sir William Judkin got into the carriage with the wounded man, for the purpose of properly placing him before Eliza should enter. While she stood near the door, awaiting their reappearance, Rattling Bill, suddenly changing his manner, and taking the leaf of his hat between his finger and thumb, sidled close to her, and in a lower growl than she had before heard him use, said,

"We thried your loock on the dice, Miss. When wather doesn't run, an' grass doesn't grow, you'll be the lady of the brave gintleman that walks by your side. Not till then."

There was a keen earnestness, and a look of triumphant cleverness about the fellow as he spoke this. Before Eliza could sufficiently recover from the effect of his strange words and his manner of address, he had hurried off.

We have admitted that our heroine had some faults. In the same spirit of candour, we point out an additional one. Perhaps,

naturally, her mind took interest and even pleasure in the marvellous. Through the stories of her nurse, the propensity had been wrought up to a terror of omens, and of every thing seemingly supernatural. To balance the defect, Nature had given her a strong and clear understanding, and happy fortune a good mother, who, early aware of her weakness, had appealed to her sound judgment to curb the dangerous bias. Eliza was brought to examine into the cause of the nightly sound that had alarmed her, or to scrutinize closely the form that twilight had shaped most fearfully. The result of this salutary system was as gratifying as, considering the force of her infantine prepossessions, could perhaps have been expected. A habit of reflection was ever at hand, to chase away any sudden appeal to her supernatural fancies. And yet such fancies would start up, even at the most absurd provocation: she would detect herself looking with alarm at the winding-sheet on the taper, or starting at the long midnight-howl of the house-dog. In fact, until reason and intellect could find time to drive away the delusion, she continued, to this day, liable to be agitated by any occurrence apparently out of the natural course of things.

Hence, upon at last taking her seat in the carriage, Eliza was fluttered a little at the prophecy of the mountebank conjuror. But, as usual, a few minutes' reflection enabled her to contemn the impudent knave, and to smile at her own credulity. "He but seeks to terrify me," said Eliza, "by an unfavourable prognostic, out of a *douceur* ample enough to make him consult his oracle again, and come back with a favourable one."

She would at once and completely dismiss the paltry occurrence from her mind. But at the very instant she formed this rational determination, the stern figure and pale countenance of Belinda St. John, in the act of uttering a similar augury, started up to her imagination, and Eliza again suffered a temporary return of her supernatural fit. It was strange, at least, that two persons totally unconnected, and unknown to each other, should successively agree in warning her of an unhappy termination of her love. And while Eliza only said it was strange, she felt the coincidence to contain a vague something more.

Again she was successful, however, in bridling her tendency to credulity. After a short but vigorous exercise of her understanding, she succeeded in dismissing the menaces of Belinda as succesfully as the designing knavery of Rattling Bill; yet, though a second time tranquil, the little struggle of Eliza's feelings left her saddened,

and inclined to anticipate, from other causes than the influence of the stars, misfortune to her lover and herself. As Sir William kept up with her father an animated conversation upon the events of the day, his smiling face still turning however, like the sunflower, to the light in which it lived, the unbidden thought that illness or accident might, without any supernatural intervention, snatch him from her for ever, brought tears into the eyes of the gentle Eliza. And ere her journey was ended, she seemed to be presented with a new cause for real alarm.

During the progress of the review, we allowed ourselves, perhaps blameably, to indulge in observation of events not immediately connected with our persons, or the conduct of our story. Indeed, we have now to acknowledge a greater error than digression to what did not vitally concern us—namely, omission of something that did. The reader has not been apprized, in fact, that one of the most respectable of the yeoman cavalry troops was headed by Mr. Henry Talbot, who, bravely attired and accoutred, was undeniably one of the most martial and gallant figures in the field.

The timid glance bestowed upon him by his former mistress, as, during the marching past, he had come rather close to our party, might have told him, that along with some lurking terror of his outraged feelings, and a graceful though involuntary show of womanly consciousness, his appearance had even in her eyes its due effect. But he either saw her not, or was willing to seem ignorant of her observation or her presence. Perhaps the latter conjecture comes nearest the truth; for, as he rode by, a cool spectator might have seen him elevate his head more proudly, and curl his lips into an expression of disdain, provoked, doubtless, by the ostentatious manner in which his rival took care to exhibit at that critical moment, the good terms on which he stood with the fair object of their common love.

Now passing the road, very near to the right of the cavalry line, Eliza caught another glimpse of Harry Talbot, but in such a situation as made him less interesting than ever he had been to her feelings. Rattling Bill stood at his stirrup, in close conversation with him, and he leant from his saddle, more confidentially to pursue the conference. That her old lover should, upon any account, condescend to familiarity with a character so vulgar and disreputable, shocked and disgusted Eliza.

This was her first feeling: it soon changed into a different and more alarming one. While the carriage yet came on, at a distance, it evi-

dently drew the attention of both. They often looked towards it; Bill pointed at it more than once; and, upon all such occasions, their engrossing converse was renewed with vigour.

Suddenly, and with a shock to herself, Eliza recalled the conjuror's prophecy. Not now, indeed, as one to ensue according to supernatural preordination, but as one to be brought about by events planned by Harry Talbot.

The old lover, maddened by disappointment, had, Eliza's fear suggested, employed this fellow to assist him in thwarting her union with his rival. But could it be possible? Could Harry Talbot, whom she had known so long and so well, enter into such a league, with such a person, for any dishonourable purpose? No. She would reject the thought; yet she resolved, without communicating her alarms, to hold herself watchfully on her guard. In this undecided state of feeling, Eliza, after losing sight of the objects of her terror, pursued her journey.

We are grieved that we cannot altogether enlighten the reader upon the real subject of the conversation at which our heroine only guessed. Indeed, we arrived, as eavesdroppers, within hearing of Talbot and his discreditable acquaintance, only in time to catch the conclusion of their dialogue.

"Slap palms wid me, Capt'n," cried Bill, extending his hand. That of Harry's was placed in it.

"Stand by me," he continued, "and, by the piper! you're the man to win her, yet."

"Call upon me this evening," said Harry, "and come up when it is dark."

"Does your bottle open its throath to a sthranger, Capt'n?"

"It shall be at your service."

"Then I'll be wid you, as sure as I'm a dhroothy sowl. Loock to you, Capt'n!" and they separated.

CHAPTER IX.

It was the day but one succeeding the review, that Nanny the Knitter was seated, at her own humble request to that effect, in Eliza Hartley's room. She necessarily assumed her old position, before described as "on her hunkers:" her knitting ap-

paratus, in full work, announced, as usual, an intended long conference. As on a former occasion, out of respect to her fair patroness, her head was covered solely by a white linen cap, without border or frill, fitting tightly, and allowing to escape some tresses of her strong, grey hair.

She resembled much one of those hieroglyphic representations of the human figure to be found on Egyptian monuments—an uncouth bundle of coarse attire, with, above it, a head clumsily indicative of humanity. For, in truth, Nanny's face was little more than a lump of redish flesh, of which the features had been so slightly marked as not to be made out without a close inspection.

And no figure one can imagine could look more ludicrously out of character with the elegance of the apartment, or more opposed to the beauty, youth, and grace of its mistress. Ireland alone, at the time we write of, could supply such a contrast for the artist's pencil: we have never elsewhere seen any thing like it, excepting Leslie's "Sancho," seated on his stool, in the presence of the sumptuous and queen-like young duchess.

"Well, Nanny," questioned Eliza, "and what is the important matter you have now to communicate?"

"Ah! then, Miss Eliza, my honey, the rason that ould Nanny comes to plank hersef, as it little does fit her, in this nate place here, is by coorse of a whisper given to me yestherday night." She paused, expecting what did occur, that she should be desired to repeat the whisper. Nanny began, however, wide of the mark; while Eliza, who had good cause to know her style, did not, except when taxed beyond endurance, venture to interrupt her.

"There's one Davy Moore, Miss Eliza, my honey, an' he's the only son of the ould widow Moore. Molly Beehan she's called, most common, by rason it's her Father's name; that was Davy Beehan, rest his sowl!—talked of, in his day, on the head o' bein' beyant the world wide, for makin' reeds for weavers. Molly's son was christhened afther the grandaddy, ould Davy Beehan, the great reed-maker. An' it would put you laughin', Miss Eliza, my honey, to hear the way Molly braggs o' the reeds he used to get his livin' by; sich as there's not to be seen, high or low, now-a-days. It may be thrue enough; bud she's not the one that ought to be ever tellin' us of it. Mysef, from the day I got an ounce o' the sense in my head, always put it down to be the hoighth o' nonsense to be braggin' out o' dead people that's wid the worms long ago, purtect the hearers! For the same rason, I never lets on about my own poor Father, rest his sowl in glory! Amin. Though he had two milch cows in his

bawn, many's the day, an' plenty widin an' widout, an' store of every thing, to spare besides—though I say it that should'nt say it."

"Nanny, you must allow I have patience with you. What has all this to do with the information you promised me?"

"Och, then! Miss Eliza, my pet, it's you has patience; and has every thing that's worth havin'. An' I pray to have it left wid you now and for ever. Amin!"

"Come to the subject, Nanny. My time is precious just now."

"That's what I give for advice to the young girls, when they're beginnin' to think of themsefs too soon, on the head o' gettin' the husbands! Peggy, I'll say—or Anty, or any other name it'll be for the time,—Don't be idle the day long; mysef is always doin': let it be little, or let it be mooch, it keeps bad thoughts out o' my way—a thousand praises over and over again be they given, for the use o' my fingers! But we were a-talkin' about Molly Beehan, the mother o' Davy Moore, the weaver. Wasn't it, Miss Eliza, my honey?"

"As you like it, Nanny."

"Well, ntchue, ntchue! He lives in the house on the side o' the hill, over the village; an' it's said by the neighbours, that Davy Moore has the gift o' seein' ghosts an' fairies, an' the likes, an' his mother the same afore him. He'll swear down sthraight, that he sees some o' the sort every day. An' so Molly Beehan obsarves me comin' by her dour yestherday evenin', an' she calls afther me. 'Nanny,' says she, 'stop and take a mouthful o' supper;' spakin' to mysef.—'Wid all my heart, Molly,' says I, makin' answer—'an' it's a friend that axes.' I crossed the thrashold, biddin' the blessin' o' Heaven afore me,—the way I always, an' ever does. Says Molly, when we war sittin' down by a good fire o' *scrochs*:* herself on the chair, an' mysef on the stool. 'I'm growin' ould, Nanny,' says she.—'Faix! Molly,' says I, 'that's thrue enough!'—She thought, Miss Eliza, I'd say she wasn't! I'm often given to make a little joke for mysef, but I saw she was hurted at it.—'We're all growin' ould, Molly,' says I; 'may we get the grace to be ready for the last warnin'. So we went on wid our gosther, the way of all ould people, till it come out what she wanted in arnest. The boy, her son, that's Davy Moore, as I war spakin' of, Miss Eliza, 'ud want a good manager for himsef, when she'd be gone, she tould me; an' she was thinkin' over in her mind to get him married while she'd be to the fore to choose for him in the manner he'd desarve. For he was a

* A peculiar kind of fuel.

hard workin' boy, an' a good weaver; an' one yard o' linen from his loom is worth three from another's. So I said over for her all the young girls in the place, that's come to the time to be married for themsefs; an' she pitched her choice on Kitty Gow, the daughther o' *Shawn-a-Gow* beyant. Bud, I'm purty sartin', though Molly has the thought that her own son is a match for a Gow, comely Kitty 'ill be thinkin' conthrary-wise. She's the thruth of a nate clane crature—not to spake of a likin' she has, though she won't let on, that I tould you of, Miss Eliza. An' Davy is only middlin' to look at—ornary in the fatures, though a big sthrong man: bud, for all that, a handy weaver. An' it often turns out, that them hansome boys doesn't make the best o' husbands. War it comin' to my own turn to do the thing, I'd never mind the face o' the man: howsomdever, it's not the same wid young girls. An', to tell the blessed thruth, when I was younger mysef, an' we'll say nothin' o' my bein' purty, though I'm not despisable to look at, I was like the rest, all for plaisin' the eye. A clane boy poor Tom was! an' good and industhrous—rest his sowl in glory above! Amin. Kitty could twist Davy round her finger if she'd take him, for he wouldn't as much as cross the thrashold widout her lave; the same he does by his ould mother this day. Only he's not very bright in the head, I believe, but has some demur, for all he's a good workman. Not manin' that it's my business to throw a matther out o' my way by tellin' my mind to his Mother, consarnin' whatsomever I 'spect. Let her go on, and I'll do my endayvour, an' then she can't lay blame to my dour.

"An', says Molly to me, says she, 'The boy is gettin' into years himself, Nanny—farther nor people thinks'—an' she wispered me not to tell it to sthrangers—'He's nigh-hand upon forty, Nanny. But'—says she, agin—'there's no use o' talkin' o' that to Shawn-a-Gow's people.'—'You're doin' a wise turn, Molly,' says I, 'to be keepin' the story to yoursef; for though forty is not over ould for a marryin' boy, it's the hoighth o' what's foolish to be talkin' about bodies' ages, be they men or be they women, an' many's the time it does a hurt. You'll see fools o' people, Molly,' says I, 'an' nothin' 'ill sarve 'em bud they must be given to writin' down in books, an' the like, the day their childher come into this ugly, sinful world—may we be kep' from all evil in it, hopin' for glory in the hereafther!'"

Eliza had frequently amused a leisure hour with Nanny's peculiar volubility, allowing the old woman to gossip on just as ing to herself: having once tolerate! the habit, for past me,

she could not now hope to control it, however disinclined to feel amused, and although suffering its infliction in expectancy of some result interesting to her present situation.

It might, under any circumstances, prove, indeed, impossible to drive Nanny from the circuit always prescribed for excursion previous to her arrival at a given point. And yet she never rose from her "hunkers" until, according to her own fashion, any information proposed was fully and clearly communicated. Her manner of telling stories much resembled the accompanying process of knitting her stockings. If the first few loops gave to an observer no idea of the shape of the article of which they were the embryo, neither did her first words seem remotely to concern the intelligence she was anxious to convey. After many, many rounds, both, however, were found connected, in unbroken series, with the gradually-formed stocking and subject. On she knitted, and on she talked, without pause, or the slightest variety of intonation, compelling the hearer to listen to her diligent looping of word upon word, until she produced, at length, a finished discourse. Quite to the purpose, however unpromising it might at first have appeared; and fitting the occasion as cleverly as her manufacture was known to adhere to the legs of her customers. But Eliza now lost all patience with her.

"I have listened, Nanny, to your gossip, in the vain hope of catching a word that concerned me, and at last arrive at the conclusion that you come here merely to chatter. But I am not in the humour for long stories to-day; so, Nanny, I shall say good-by to you."

"Oh, then, Miss Eliza, my honey, don't turn me away, nor don't go from me, becase what's to come concarns you much, an' is's fittin' you ought to hear it. Sure you well know, my gra! I wouldn't be so bould as to be cockin' mysef up here, like *my-lady-in-ordha'** if 'twasn't for your good, Miss Eliza, my honey!"

"Then, Nanny, endeavour to leave out all farther preface, and do come to the subject."

"Sure I will, Miss Eliza, my pet, wid the help from above. Why not? You know it was spakin' to Molly Beehan I was, my honey?"

"I am sorry, Nanny, you mistook the person."

"Well, I tould you, Miss Eliza, that Davy Moore, the weaver,—the boy, Molly an' I was talkin' about,—has a gift o' seein' things the neighbours can't get a sight of. To spake nothin' but the

* My high lady—one assuming a station unfitted to her.

thruth, they have'nt much wish for the same. The mother, Molly Beehan, has the like gift, but not near so good as Davy Moore. Well; Davy was at the pradin' o' the sodgers, the day afore yisterday. He was lookin' at a terrible man they call Rattlin' Bill, throwin' dice there, as I'm tould, in the Divil's name; an' sure the wicked sinner must go for to tell poor Davy, he'd send him ridin' on a *thrawneen* a year and a day, wid the fairies, only because Davy hadn't money for him. Davy come home an' tould his mother; an' they both went back together, wid some money to him. The moment Molly Beehan saw Rattlin' Bill, she knew him well, though all the people here thinks him a sthranger; and then she grew more afeard, knowin' the man had the power to do what he said he would. So she was makin' up to give him the hooshmoney, when she seen him bleedin' a sodger—a man in years—an' I'm sorry to call him a fool into the bargain—that went a sodgerin' in his ould days, when he ought to be makin' his sowl. Well, Miss Eliza, my honey, Molly was waitin' for her time to spake wid him on the head o' not doin' any thing to Davy, an' she follyed him about the place, until she hard him whisperin' you, my gra. An' she hard him tellin' you, Miss Eliza, that you'd never be married to the brave gintleman, Sir William Judkin, the honey pet! while grass grew or wather run. An' to know did Rattlin' Bill say such a thing in thrue arnest, is what brings me to plump mysef down here, where the sort o' me has no call to be?"

"There was, indeed, a presuming person who addressed me to that effect, Nanny," said Eliza, a little startled at the old woman's mysterious allusions to the dice-thrower.

"Then presarve us from the power of all evil things and people, now an' for ever, Amin!" said Nanny, crossing her forehead, and piously looking upward. That's a bad chance for you, Miss Eliza, my honey-pet, when the heart is fixed upon the love o' the handsome, good-nathured gintleman; an' 'ill be sore hearted, I'm afeard, wid the loss of him, Lord help it!"

"Tush, Nanny! I am only sorry I did not represent his impertinence to my father, and have the fellow punished for his freedom."

"An' you don't b'lieve what he says 'ill come to pass, Miss Eliza, my honey?"

"Do you think me a fool, silly woman?" Eliza cried, firing up, and speaking very fast. "Unless the fellow be an agent in some plot, devised and to be executed by another, with whom I have seen him in conversation, I can laugh at such a ridiculous prophecy."

"An' who was the other you seen him talking to, Miss Eliza?"

"I grieve to say—to Mr. Harry Talbot."

"Ah! then, as sure as I'm a lump of a sinner afore glory, this holy and blessed day, maybe there is somethin' o' the sort goin' on, my poor gra of a Miss Eliza."

"Explain yourself, Nanny. And now, for Heaven's sake! be brief and to the purpose."

"I never seen Rattlin' Bill, to know who he was. But it comes into my head that I laid eyes on him, for all that, the very mornin' o' this day, an' overhard him, morebetoken, spakin' some words to Square Talbot. Tell us, Miss Eliza;—is rattling Bill a thick short man wid a bould, saucy face, a cunnin' look wid his eyes, and a thiefish gait o'going. And has he second-hand *shuckeraun** clothes on his back, differin' from the honest counthry-people's sthrong, lastin' frieze, that looks like as if he picked up one thing here an' another there, an' none o' the same kind?"

"You have described the man, Nanny."

"See that! It was him, then, I obsarved and hard, sure enough, wid Square Talbot—Bad manners to him, I say, for keepin' sich company!"

"Tell me, clearly, what you saw and heard, Nanny?" Eliza asked, now greatly interested.

"It was brave an' arly in the mornin' when I left Molly Beehan's cabin, Miss Eliza, my honey! I was makin' my way over to the Coort here, becase the heart widin me longed to ax your ownsel' about what she was tellin' me. To be here soon, I was makin' a short cut through the fields, Miss Eliza, my pet;—an' it's a way I have to be sayin' my prayers afore me arly in a mornin'; blessed be the holy name!—I says a little share, at all times—; sich as three Pattherin-aveys or the likes, or maybe more, or maybe less; jist as I'm hurrid, or has time. An' I gives my thanks, the best I'm able, for all things, when I rise up from my bed. An', becase I'm growin' ould, like Molly Beehan, an' must be thinkin' o' the last home,—purtect the hearers!—I always says exthra prayers, goin' quite an' asy, along the fields, an' the road, an' while I'm fastin'.—Morebetoken, it behoulds us to offer up a prayer, too, for our bennefacthors; an', never a day o' my life, Miss Eliza, my honey, bud I says three Pattherin-aveys an' a Creed, an' axes Heaven to give you loock an' happiness, on the head o' them—The same I'll do to my dyin' day, an' afther—when I'm gone into my Glory, as I

* Meanly-contrived.

have hopes of, poor sinner that I am. The mercies on my wicked sowl now, an' in the day o' judgment. Amin!

"Well. I was goin' the path by the ditch, * that's about one or two fields, more or less, from Square Talbot's house. His voice sounded at th' other side, an' a great, hoarse voice makin' answer to him; so I stopped in my prayers, keepin' the dicket o' my bades betwixt my fingers, till I'd know where to begin again. I said to mysef 'twould be betther not to go in Square Talbot's way, for fear he'd pay me, maybe, for all his misfort'ns. That I mayn't sin, says I, it's a little way but he might hurt me! So I sits down, an' stoops my head, the manner he couldn't ketch a view o' me. Up he come, at th' other side o' the ditch, he an' his crony—merry Aesther to me—but they stopt for a little start, fornent me; an' I hard Square Talbot sayin'—"

(To give an idea of a person of superior cast, Nanny assumed a lofty tone of voice, held up her head, and looked as grand as she could.)

"'An' when do you mane to bring your plans into action?' (I believe it was,) says Square Talbot, spakin' to the impident lookin' rogue of a fellow, as free as if he was discoursin' one of his own sort.

"'All in good time,' says th' other, in his big hoarse voice, but not hoarse the way a body would be when h'd kitch a cowld, but like as if he was spakin' far down in his throath."

Nanny need not have described Rattling Bill's cadence, as she had ably imitated it while giving his words. She again took up a high tone to represent the squire's manner and bearing.

"'Wouldn't it be betther,' says Square Talbot, makin' answer to th' other, wouldn't it be betther to go on in the plain, simple way I advise? 'Hah!' says his crony agin—this was by way of a laugh; but it wasn't a laugh, but more like the gruff bark of a bull-dog when he'd be runnin' to saze a hoult he wouldn't let go till the piece came out wid him—'Hah!' says he, 'lave all that to me, Capt'n. If I don't put 'em asundher'"—

"Good Heavens!" interrupted Eliza.

"'If I don't put 'em asundher, an' lave you the prize to make your own of her,—why, Bill Nale doesn't know what he's about, that's all, though I wouldn't b'lieve the *bosthoon* 'ud tell him as mooch.'

"'You may depend on my eternal gratitude,' says Square

* Hedge, meant.

Talbot, an' they both biggined to walk away wid themsefs. Pullin' off the hat, an' cockin' the ear out from my head, I jest hard the bould-lookin' man sayin'—(Nanny bent her head, and again spoke in her throat)—' An' a thankful gintleman wid a purse in his pocket, I'm proud o' knowin'!' Then they went beyant my hearin.' When they was far out o' soight, I crossed the ditch, an' made my way to the Coort dhroppin my bades, an' sayin' all the prayers on them afore me as I went; two Pattherin-aveys for one body; two more for another body; maybe three for another body, jest accordin' wid their bein' good bennyfacthors. An' when I said 'em all out-an'-out, I put up the bades in the little pouch is for 'em, here a-one-side o' the big pocket that houlds the worsted, an' all sorts; an' I was wondherin what the two was talkin' about. Faix, Miss Eliza, my honey, it never came into my thick head that you an' the darlin' Sir William Judkin was concarned in it, till you spoke jest now o' their cullodgin together, that you seen wid your own two handsome eyes."

"Oh, Nanny! can this be possible?" Since the old woman's report of Bill's first words, Eliza, almost petrified at being again strongly presented with what was, upon the review-field, only a vague suspicion, had remained in an agitated reverie, scarce alive to the succeeding ramble of the gossip's monotonous voice. The means by which it was threatened to separate her and her lover, were imagined in many frightful shapes, of which the most vivid now appeared in her address to Nanny.

"Oh, Nanny! can this be possible? Can Harry Talbot have been all along such a deception? Could he possibly contemplate—would he be accessary to—" her voice failed her, and died away into a feeble whisper—"to the murder of Sir William Judkin?"

Nanny started in real terror at the sudden, though, she soon concluded, not implausible conjecture.

"Och, purtect us an' save us, now and for ever! Amin. I'll never be the one to say, Miss Eliza, my honey, that Square Talbot 'ud plan sich a terrible thing, Lord keep all sinful an' wicked-thoughts o' the sort far from every mother's son. But—presarve us once again!—there's no knowin' the kind them men is made of till they're put to the thrial. More particklar, where the love is crossed wid 'em. I knew many a one in my time do things, when their hearts 'ud be scalded that-away, that no one in the world wide 'ud think they'd do aforehand. An' sure I tuck it on mysef to larn the fashion Square Talbot went on at home, sence the day he larned you wouldn't have him. His ould housekeeper, (she and mysef

are gossips, by rason she stood for the little girl o' mine, poor Tom's only child, now settled snug in Ross town, praises be given!)—Nelly, tould me that he's not the laste like himsef, that used to be. He has the cloud on his brows for ever, an' goes through the house widout spakin a word, or else a wicked one to whomsomdever opens their lips to him, or stands afore him."

"Heaven protect me, then, Nanny!"

"Bud I'm amost afeared to tell you, my honey, what it is, 'ill make it the greatest thrial to my darlin' pet, Miss Eliza."

"Say it out, Nanny."

"Oeh! then, the mercies above grant you grace an' patience through the whole you'll have to suffer, Miss Eliza. You war sprightly, an' you war hearty, an' 'twould make an ould heart to be joyful only to look on your sunshiny face, my gra. A sharp body might be sayin' you war giddy, an' had no notion o' thinkin' afore you: an' why not? For it was a fair mornin', an' no sign of a storum to blacken it. But poor Nanny saw you had only the joy o' young days upon you; an' that there was sense an' forecast waitin' in your heart, for the time that 'ud come. An' I put thrust in the Holy Name, for you, that when your thrials flock thick about you, you'll be stout an' able for 'em all."

Nanny paused a moment, and looked, through swimming eyes, at her fair young auditor, who, in return, bent upon the old woman such a look of troubled attention as might be wondered at, if one considered the contrast in rank, education, and state of intellect between the two persons. But Nanny's manner was impressive: in more instances than one, Eliza had had reason to judge favourably of her discriminating powers: and, without speaking, she now eagerly nodded her head for her strange counsellor to proceed.

"Here it is, Miss Eliza. That terrible man, Ratt in' Bil!, *has* the power to know that your love 'ill be crassed, an' that you'll never be a wife where the mind is settled for marryin'. For the same rason, he goes wid himself to Square Talbot, an' he tells him that he's the boy to put a bar betwixt you and Sir William, an' so he gets money on the head of it."

Eliza, although real cause for alarm still remained in the alliance between Harry Talbot and the dice-thrower, could not avoid smiling at Nanny's final demonstration of the fate to which the old gossip's pathetic speech had just doomed her. A weight of apprehension was indeed raised off her heart. And, as in silence she followed up the tendency of Nanny's credulous communication, it seemed that even serious fears might be dissipated by it.

After a reverie of some length, during which her companion studiously and compassionately watched her—

"Nanny," said Eliza briskly, "your simple commentary shows me at once this knave's drift. He is only exercising his ingenuity on Harry Talbot, whose mind catches at any absurd prospect held out to it, and so fits him to become a dupe.

"But they talked of plans, my honey pet?"

"Yes, I forgot that," said Eliza, again alarmed.

"An' them plans," continued Nanny, awfully, is dalins wid—— I 'm afeared to spake the word—bud—— *chrosk-o'-Christha* keep us from his power! It's the —— Divil, I mane!"

"I credit no such fables, Nanny. If such, indeed, be the man's pretended agency in his plans, I can again smile at him and them. And now, I further recollect, that, according to the discourse you have repeated this juggler has not disclosed to Harry his proposed method of winning for him an unwilling bride. Of course, they are not connected *in a plan*, whatever it may be. And, while in poor Talbot's view it can only extend to the harmless endeavour of witchcraft or magic, he is not even allowed to learn the form of incantation."

"Some o' your words, Miss Eliza, I know the manin of, an' some I don't. But no matther for that. I'll tell you the histhory o' Bill Nale, or Rattlin' Bill, as they call him, becase he's a blustherin man, an', morebetoken, follys the thrade o' rattlin' o' dice at fairs and pottheens."

"Well, Nanny, go on."

And Nanny pursued the narrative in her usual digressive style. But we will now venture to report her in our own language.

Molly Beehan was her authority for the account. Thirty years before the time of our tale, Molly held herself to be still young, and, as she asserted, "well to look at." In those days, she had made a journey into the south of the county of Wexford, to visit a maternal relative; and during her sojourn there, Rattling Bill had come under her notice.

He was the only son of a decrepit widow, a native of the North, as her account told, who had come to settle in a lone cottage by the roadside. At her appearance amongst the more primitive Southerns, Bill was a lad of about eighteen. His mother and himself had little visible means of subsistence; yet they never either begged or wanted. The old woman seldom ventured out of her cottage. Bill became known as a handsome fellow, with an exuberant flow of spirits, and a careless, blustering humour. He would sometimes work in the harvest, the potato-digging, or the hay-making seasons;

but was generally idle, and had money in his pocket notwithstanding. With the fair sex, young Bill became a favourite, and so, for some time, continued. But tales to the disadvantage of his mother and himself afterwards gained ground; and then he was avoided by all, excepting by some careless persons of his own stamp.

In fact, it began to be whispered that people were losing their butter; and several other mishaps, which could not well be accounted for, were, after some consideration, attributed to the machinations of ould Granny Nale.

A passionate man, in the neighbourhood, quarrelled with his family, deserted them, and went away, no one could tell whither. Those he forsook remained miserably anxious to learn his fate. In their distress, it was hinted to them by a neighbour, to seek information at the hands of "Granny Nale," and accordingly they visited her dwelling.

A dingy pack of cards supplied her with the means of forming her incantation. Consulting these in her bed, whence for the last year she had not been able to stir, the hag informed the disconsolate family, that the absent man was at that moment in the County of Kerry, sojourning with a relation, whose person and condition she described, and whom, from her picture, they at once recognised.

The eldest son of the deserted family undertook a journey to this person's house; found his father living in it, and induced him to return home. The terrible fame of the old woman spread far and wide. And while many stolen visits were paid to her cabin by those who, in various cases of difficulty, threw themselves upon her advice, she became generally feared and detested as a person who held a diabolical connexion.

She died. Rather, when upon a certain occasion a certain person repaired to her dwelling for supernatural assistance in a pressing emergency, Granny Nale had disappeared, and was never again heard of. The neighbours vainly looked to see her buried in some sort or other. After the lapse of a week, they knowingly and mysteriously observed to each other that they might as well "be lookin' for a dead ass, or a tinker's funeral;"—events proverbially held to be impossible among the Irish peasantry. But, however, she had been conveyed away, or wherever she had gone, there was, soon after her disappearance, a visible increase, with many housewives, in the quantity of butter, upon churning-day.

Bill had now the cabin to himself. It transpired that he inherited a portion of his mother's secrets, and, in some peculiar respects, even outstripped her divining skill. His passion for card-

playing was excessive. He sought to indulge it, amongst his simple neighbours, on all possible occasions; and whenever he played, another instance of his preternatural endowments became apparent—he always won. With cards, too, as had been his mother's habit, he undertook to tell fortunes and develope the darkest secrets. And it was well known, so it was—

At this part of the narration, Nanny paused, looked frightened, and after some attempts to master herself, proceeded:—

"Of a thruth, Miss Eliza, I'm sore afeard to tell the way he got lave to do every thing wid them unloocky things—them cards. The praises be given! one o' the sort was never widin my hands, barrin' a time that I found some of 'em on Jimmy Sheehan's dhresser, when I helped to bile the praties wid 'em, an' nobody the wiser. An' I can as good as be on my oath that I seen 'em goin' up the chimbly in a blaze o' fire. But I'm afeard, as I tould you, my honey! to let out the way Bill Nale got his power over the cards"—lowering her voice to its least whisper. She drew out her beads, passed over her forehead the cross attached to them, and then holding it before her—"Evil things," continued Nanny, "don't come near that sign, an' by coorse, can't come near them *that* houlds it. So while it's forment me, I'll tell out, at last, the way Bill Nale got the power."

Slowly and hesitatingly did Nanny reveal the dread process. We forbear to repeat her words, although they have been faithfully transmitted to us, and although we have the best authority for asserting that in more cases than that of Bill Nale, attempts have, even recently, been made to obtain, by his method, the mastery over chance and fortune he was supposed to possess. It will be sufficient to mention, that the form according to which, by Nanny's account, the mountebank called on the aid of the Prince of Darkness, was gone through under the roof of the chapel he sometimes visited, and during the occurrence of a certain part of the usual service. We may add, that if the slightest religious feeling had ever stirred in the wretch's bosom, the moment of his blaspheming apostasy, however really futile its mummery, must have been felt by him with appalling intensity.

Soon after his mother's death, Bill Nale found himself avoided by his neighbours—a marked and lonely man, openly dreaded and secretly hated, with whom none of his kind would hold intercourse. Suddenly, his cabin-door was closed, and he was not to be seen in the district. As suddenly it appeared open, and Bill re-entered

in it—and with him a wife, or companion, whom he had just brought home.

And this wife, or companion, proved to be a more mysterious personage than even Bill or his mother ever had been. Twice only was she seen by any one living near them. Once by a young peasant, who, during his momentary absence, went into Bill's dwelling to consult him upon some difficult question: a single glance at her, and her words and manner to this person that had "intruded on her," bespoke a lady of high condition; but haughty and dark to an excess that almost made him tremble. Upon the second occasion of her being openly seen by another neighbour, she was on her way, accompanied by Bill, out of the district, to which they never again returned,—and her appearance and bearing fully confirmed the former impression.

All this happened, according to Molly Beehan, some thirty years ago. Yet, at Bill's re-appearance to her eyes, after that lapse of time, and so far from the scene of his youthful notoriety, she immediately recognised him.

With regard to his wonderful wife, many stories prevailed of the manner in which she had become united to him. One in particular, whispered by a close intimate of Bill's, gained superior repute, and in Molly Beehan's estimation, in Nanny's, and in our's, seems, therefore, entitled to historical notice.

Bill was universally known to be a fellow of daring, bravado humour, which feared neither man, devil, nor angel. And he was going along, of a starry night, still more humourously and bravely inclined by the aid of whiskey, and singing and shouting as loudly as he could, when suddenly he heard strange voices about him. He stopped and listened.

"A horse for me!" said a voice. He turned briskly to the quarter whence it came, but could see no one.

"A horse for me!" said another voice; and, "A horse for me!"—"A horse for me!" was repeated, in quick succession, at every point around him.

"And a horse for me, too!" cried Bill, giving a shout and a jump.

The words were scarcely uttered, when he found himself on the back of a steed, that capered and curveted "in great style." He heard a "huzza!" from a hundred tiny throats, and away galloped his courser, like the north wind over a hill-side in winter. As he swept along, he could not be ignorant that, before him, and be-

hind him, and at each side of him, other horses were racing just as fiercely.

Away, away, over hedge, ditch, and brook, through thick and thin, Bill and his comrades galloped. Until of a sudden, and of its own accord, his spirited steed stopped before a large house, situated—Heaven knows where! All the other horsemen stopped too; and Bill, looking round him, now saw the riders From amongst them, one melancholy-looking wight came to his side, and addressed him.

"Bill Nale," said he, speaking in a voice of tiny cadence, "stand upon the back of your horse, and climb in through yonder window."

"For what rason?" asked Bill.

"Upon a sofa, in the chamber into which it leads, you will find a beautiful young lady sleeping. Take her softly in your arms, and bear her down to us. We cannot assist you, because there is a certain spaniel dog, also asleep, at her feet. So, in with you."

"Never say it again, ma-bouchal," answered Bill; "an' glad am I o' the offer." He climbed in at the window as desired, found the lady just as had been announced to him, took her in his arms without ever awaking her, descended with her from the window, and placed her before him on his horse. "Well done, Bill Nale!" was the general cry, and the whole cavalcade set off, over the ground they had come, at even a wilder pace than before, until they reached the spot where Bill first mounted his steed. There was a second halt, and they all surrounded Bill and the lady, shouting, "Down! down! down!"

Bill Nale did not shout "Down!" but remained quietly seated on his charger, with the fair prize still asleep in his arms.

"Come down, Bill Nale," added the personage who had before addressed him—"you must come down at least." Bill found himself standing on the road; but still he held the lady close.

"Give her to me, now," continued the same individual.

"Give her to you, is it?" asked Bill.

"Yes; she is my sweetheart."

"To the seventeen duouls wid you!" said Bill. "I have a likin' for her myself, and never as much as a finger will you lay on her."

"Give her up, Bill Nale, or rue it!" exclaimed his enraged rival.

"Give her up, give her up, or we'll cripple you!" shouted his friends.

"Bother!" shouted Bill, in return; "D'ye think, ye *sheeogs** o' the Divil, that it's a *bosthoon* ye have to talk to? I know how to match ye! Let ye only daare to come widin arum's length, an' see if I don't pelt ye, by dozens, over Donard Hill, into the sey! Aha! I'm the boy for ye! Give her up, *inagh?* Och, ay! give ye what's my own arnin?"

"We'll make you out a store of riches, Bill Nale, if you yield possession of my sweetheart," said the most interested personage of the throng.

"That's more o' the yarn," answered Bill. "*Arragh*, go spake to them that doesn't know ye! Riches? Ay! ye'd fill me a bag full o' slates, lookin' like goold guineas, but they'd be nothin more than slates in the mornin'. Make off, I tell ye! I have a charm here, in my pocket; an' if ye don't, I'll shake it at ye. Hah!"—as a cock crew—"d'ye hear that? run for your lives now, or the cock 'll ate ye!"

Whether in despair of succeeding against him, or that the cock-crow was indeed a thing they could not withstand, the discomfited rout, with a low, wild wailing, that gradually died along the midnight blast, disappeared in a trice.

And the lady thus won was, the neighbours said, the same he brought home to his cabin, and with whom he shortly after left the country, that is, the south of the county of Wexford, never again to appear in it. But, ere the conclusion of our story, we shall endeavour, for the reader's satisfaction, to collect more correct information of her identity.

CHAPTER XX.

SUFFICIENT good sense will be accorded to Eliza, and sufficient mastery over her artificial prepossession for the supernatural, to enable her to reject Nanny's views of the terrible in Rattling Bill's character. At the same time, it will be observed that, from a portion of the gossip's whole communication, our heroine was warranted in drawing new and real fear of the man, and dislike of his practices.

* Fairies.

Having dismissed her cunning and credulous, but very honest old counsellor, with an injunction to keep her watchfulness alive, Eliza proceeded, at a pace more sedate and measured than we recollect to have yet seen her adopt, to take her seat in the drawing-room, where Miss Alicia was closely engaged over her inexhaustible embroidery. So different, indeed, from her usual happy step, was the gait with which her aunt heard her approach and enter the room, that the good old lady raised her head, to note who the supposed stranger might be.

"Dear child," she said, "is it you? How pensive and languid!—What is the matter?"

"I can scarcely inform you, Aunt; at least, not clearly and distinctly. I am in bad spirits, that's all." The confused state of Eliza's apprehension of what had just been detailed to her, left her, indeed, unable, if she were willing, to communicate the cause of her dejection.

"I trust, my love, you experience nothing like a presentiment of evil," continued Miss Alicia, ever tender and romantic.

"I do not know, dear Aunt. And yet it is, perhaps, under such a depression I labour."

"Heaven grant you may misconceive the nature of your sensations, Eliza! for, oh!"—(Miss Alicia's usual sigh, deprived of all spirit by constant exercise, sounded, though loudly given, rather as an accompaniment than as a signification of woe.) "I remember but too well, that for a month previous to the dreadful account of my never-to-be-forgotten loss, I was visited by deep forebodings of unhappy tidings. And, my dear niece, although my mind is strong enough to reject the notion of supernatural prognostic, and although even the fact I allude to did not induce a general credulity, permit me further to inform you, that *his* death was foretold to the wretched survivor."

"Dear Aunt, is it possible?" questioned Eliza, sitting down, and looking with unusual interest at the old lady.

"It is an unquestionable truth, child; I will relate the circumstances.—Upon an October evening, the twilight setting in, I was walking down the avenue, more careless than I now am of the sharp breeze that rudely discomposed my youthful locks, and blew hardily against my forehead. The leaves were falling, and I mournfully watched their twirling on the wind, the last time they were to feel its upward current. Between two of the venerable trunks that lined my path, an aged and meanly attired female suddenly appeared. She craved charity in the uncouth accent of the Northerns"—

"A northern woman, you say, Aunt?"

"Yes, my love; the accent, so very different from our southern one, is easily recognised."

"And how long is this ago?"

"Alas! the never-to-be-effaced date can by me be readily and faithfully supplied. I speak of an evening over which time has rolled the shadows of more than thirty years."

Eliza looked more sombre still. It was, of course, only a coincidence. But something in her Aunt's words—her mention of the northern woman—seemed to her excited mind to chime in with the story she had just heard from Nanny. The good old lady continued:

"She craved a charity from me. The suddenness of her appearance had somewhat startled me, and I did not immediately reply. She renewed her petition in an impatient manner: I felt for my purse—found that I had left it behind me; and was consequently obliged to give a refusal. She spoke again: her voice was, in its lowest key, an unpleasant one; now it sounded like a continued scream.

"'You have a hard heart!' she said.

"'Indeed, good woman,' I answered, 'I would anxiously relieve your wants, were the means at present to my hand.'

"'Tell me no such story!' she screamed again: 'but for your want of charity, listen to me: you will have sorrow of your own to think of! You will never again look on him whose image is, this moment, uppermost in your mind. A strange land will hide his bones.'"

Miss Alicia's voice here sank low; a tear trembled in her "lack-lustre eye;" and was responded to by a nervous suffusion in that of her niece.

"A month after," she added, "I learned his death!"

"Did the shocking woman go away as soon as she had said these words, Aunt?"

"No, dear child: I stood for a moment astonished and terror-stricken. She confronted me. I then thought I saw another figure, the figure of a man, moving slowly and stealthily from behind another trunk"—

"Dreadful!" whispered Eliza.

"Dreadful!" cried a deep voice close behind the two ladies.

Both screamed in unison; and with a sudden jerk of her head, which had been brought closely in contact with Miss Alicia's, our heroine displaced, and somewhat shattered, her aunt's spectacles. A general laugh succeeded, and Sir William Judkin, for he was the

new-comer, took an opportunity to ask, with gay meaning, "Do you give any credit to prognostics of the nature of that with which, I apprehend, the wild woman favoured you, dear madam?"

"No! my good young friend: although in the particular instance referred to, the prophecy proved, alas! but too accurate." Miss Alicia's usual long-drawn sigh followed.

"Well; we need not become utterly credulous, even while we refuse, in a particular case, to remain obstinate to our own experience. I rejoice to divine from your wisdom, dear Miss Alicia, reasons why I should not quite despise a prediction which has been spoken to myself this morning."

The ladies looked interested.

"In good earnest, yes. You remember a knavish fellow who attracted our notice in the review-field?"

"The dice-thrower?" questioned Eliza, quickly.

"Yes; he who consulted his dice as we are told astrologers read the stars; and whispered disclosures into ears that, if one might judge by the faces of the listeners, were not prepared to receive, in such a manner, such intelligence."

"I noticed all this," said Eliza gravely, and with increasing interest.

"Well. The fellow's blustering cleverness much attracted me. Perhaps there is something in a superior mind, even when exercising its mastery for knavish purposes, which we cannot refuse to admire. On my way hither to-day, I encountered this conjuror; and he it was who spoke this augury to me."

"And that augury gave you such good spirits?" asked Eliza.

"It did, indeed."

"Then it was a happy one?" she continued, recollecting how contrary had been the import of Rattling Bill's prophecy to herself, and anxious to learn whether or not his promises to Sir William were in connexion with the same subject.

"Listen, dearest Eliza, and judge. I had seen the man standing at the road-side, long before I rode up to him. As soon as we met, he pulled off his hat, and made me a salute of friendly recognition. I returned his civility, reined up within speaking distance, and requested to know whither he was bound.

"'I was waitin' to meet your honour; and well did I guess the road you'd be spurrin' over,' he answered, smiling cunningly.

"There is, as you may have remarked, an approach to careless, saucy familiarity in the varlet's manner, that almost sues for chastisement: and yet a jocularity and a peculiar acknowledgment of

addressing a superior to qualify his boldness, and save him from salutary discipline.

"'Waiting for me, Sir?' I asked; 'and upon what account, pray?'

"'I have a matther in my knowledge that concarns your honour,' he replied."

It is to be remarked, that the Baronet successfully imitated the manner and the brogue of the person he was pourtraying.

"'Let me hear it, then,' I said.

"'I'm tould your honour has an open hand—an' so every one to his thrade, as the mouse-thrap-maker said to the lord bishop. Did your honour ever hear the story?'

"'Never; but, I presume, I am now to hear it.'

"'There was a mouse-thrap-maker, an' he lived by his thrade; an' he'd make a rat-thrap just as handy. An'—(no help for it, I hear!)—his Lordship's reverence was very round, an' smooth, an' comfortable to look at. 'Have you your prayers, my good man?' says he to the rat-thrap-maker.—'A neighbour's share,' says the other. 'Repate 'em for me.' The mouse-thrap-maker done his best; but he went asthray, an' made bud a middlin' offer enough; an' morebetoken, he put in a curse in the middle, becase his work went wrong wid him, from minding two things at the same time.—'I'm ashamed o' my life o' you, for one ould sinner,' says the Bishop, 'to come to this time o' life, an' not to have your prayers.'—'Will you answer me a foolish sort of a question?' says the mouse-thrap-maker.—'By coorse,' says the Bishop, making answer.—'Well, asthore: what's the length o' this wire, that 'ill go to make a mouse-thrap?'—'I 'm sartin I can't tell,' says the Bishop again.—'Well, then, every man to his thrade,' says the other: 'an' so, do you mind yours, and I 'ill mind mine, and there'll be no jostlin' on the road betwixt us.'

"He told this anecdote humorously," continued Sir William.

"And truly," said Miss Alicia, graciously, "I think your imitation must be equally good; I have seen, on the stage, worse specimens than you give us of the drollery of the Irish character!"

"That is flattering, dear Madam, but I believe I have a talent for catching the rich peculiarities of our humble countrymen. As to the stage, mention it not.—One seldom sees any thing represented there, but a broad, unnatural caricature of the Irishman, which depends for effect exclusively upon a novel and extravagant mode of speaking, set off by buffoonery and grimace, and studiously put in contrast with the propriety of tone and manner about it. And while

even the genuine brogue is thus unknown or disregarded,—a brogue, by the way, not half as barbarous as many to be found throughout England,—the strong intellect of the Irish of the lower classes, displayed in their most humerous sallies, and redeeming them from absurdity, even while they are amusing, is, generally speaking, almost lost sight of."

"This may be very true; but you are straying from the subject,' said Eliza.

With laughing apologies to his "fair remembrancer," Sir William proceeded.

"The application to himself of the anecdote made by my acquaintance, was, that the announcement of future events formed part of his professional practice; and so "every man to his thrade:" and before he would tell me what was to happen me, he expected his fee. To such an arrangement, notwithstanding the flattering report my soothsayer had heard of my openhandedness, I demurred; but finally it was agreed, that I should measure my recompense by the value of the information to be conveyed, strictly bargaining to pay the moment he should have ended his prognostic. After all, I suspect this bargain amounted pretty nearly to payment in advance: so that I believe I was outwitted.

"All preliminaries having been settled—'Now,' quoth, my prophet of prophets, 'I come here to tell your honour to go on bravely, an' like a man, at the big house—for—' and 'he grinned intelligence,' as Sterne has it, 'from ear to ear.'"

Sir William made an abrupt stop. He perceived, notwithstanding Miss Alicia's praises of his imitative powers, that his talent had at last been indiscreetly exercised. His mistress's cheeks crimsoned at the vulgar allusion to their relative situations and mutual feelings, her pretty brow contracted, her lips curled, and her eyes glanced downward. He turned to Miss Alicia. She had ceased her embroidering, folded her arms, sat up perpendicularly in her chair, and was craning her long and stately neck at him.

"How the Deuce," he thought, "am I to get out the rest? If a mere allusion covers the one with angry blushes, and sets the other erecting her virgin crest in this absurd fashion, what is to happen when they hear all that they must hear? Let me see;—the words in which the rascal conveyed his promise of happiness to me, may be translated."

A minute's pause ensued. He was not desired by either lady to go on.

"Yet neither am I forbidden," he continued, to himself; "and

women are not women, if some little yearnings of curiosity do not, this moment, lurk in my Eliza's heart under all that severity of brow. As to the old maid, a fico for her and her affectation.'

Thus rallying, he resumed aloud—"I believe, fair ladies, I had best retain, for the joyousness of my individual bosom, an account of the future fortune prophesied to me. Less interested persons might, I allow, consider it a very terrible threat."

"Make an end of the matter, Sir William," said Eliza, "but, pray, use your own style of language, the language of a gentleman. There is a reason why—why—I should learn the tendency of that rude person's words to you."

"No doubt, beautiful daughter of Eve!—I see I can still read a woman's heart through her brow," thought Sir William. He went on aloud, with no bad assumption of gravity and even of timidity. "Dearest and fairest Eliza, in obeying your command, I trust nothing will occur to startle you. In truth, the gifted man merely assured me, on the authority of I do not know what powers, that if I conducted myself properly, I—should—be—married. That is the whole matter. And whatever the Fates decree, surely I must fulfil my destiny, no matter how dark it may prove to be. In the present instance, I am by no means disposed to quarrel with the Immortals—for by themselves I swear, that the doom thus woven for me is one, warp and weft, of such dazzling bliss, I cannot steadily fix my weak though grateful eyes upon it."

During this speech, Eliza's cheek often changed from red to pale, and from pale to red. Her thoughts and feelings were of a mixed nature. The half-credulous mood in which Sir William found her upon entering the room, disposed her to listen attentively to his account of Bill's prophecy. And since it now appeared that the juggler promised happiness to her love, all lurking uneasiness at his former augury to herself vanished for ever. Then came the more important reflection, that, notwithstanding poor Nanny's gossip, there could exist no plan, in this man's mind, against a succession of events, which, with such light-hearted foolery and good humour he was himself so anxious to fortell. Nanny must have misapprehended the conversation that, in sore personal apprehension, she had but imperfectly overheard. Harry Talbot became freed, at the same time, from suspicions degrading to him. All this was great relief to Eliza, as well as to the dismal humour in which, after parting with Nanny, she had approached her aunt in the drawing-room. She raised her head and eyes, in a full return of her usual vivacity;

and in her rush of happiness bestowed upon her lover a glance that made him an enraptured man.

"But I am not asked the name of the angel who, it is prophesied, is to be guardian over my happiness?" he continued.

"In a matter so very delicate, name-telling would be treacherous," said Eliza, demurely.

"Quite improper, indeed," echoed Miss Alicia, seriously.

"Then I shall only say—" resumed the gay and happy Baronet; "if it is not admitted by mankind at large, that she is superior to all celestials who are at present vouchsafed to earth, the demurring person or persons I will bid to mortal combat, and by weapons and valour. And Heaven to guide the issue, prove them false knights, incapable of estimating her excellence and charms."

"*We* will not listen to her praises," said Eliza. "Envy cannot, indeed, lurk beneath the feelings of gentle dames and damsels. Still, no lady brooks to be humiliated by hearkening to the overstrained eulogy of another."

"Well; but there was an addition to the augury," continued Sir William.

"Was there?"—questioned Eliza, successfully beguiled into a newinterest. Then, noticing the triumphant sparkle of the tempter's eye, she blushed, though she smiled too, and averted her face from his gaze.

"Truly was there. I may now be trusted to continue in the very words of the oracle! 'Your honour 'ill think it's piper's news I'm goin' to tell you—news that you had in your own head aforehand. Bud did'n't the father o' the lady bid you wait a year?—I know he did—so, you needn't make answer. Now let your honour give ear to me, howsomdever:—four moons won't shine out till my words come to pass. An' now, Sir William, is them tidings worth a purse o' goold, or a purse o' silver?'

"'Whether true or false, my honest fellow,' I answered, 'here's your fee.'

"I spurred my horse, and galloped towards Hartley Court. A shout from behind reached me, and, turning round in my saddle, I saw the dice-thrower waving his curious hat, and huzzaing loudly and lustily, as if to my future happiness; and even when we had lost sight of each other, his clamour sounded in my ears."

Eliza, more and more assured that the drift of Rattling Bill's whole manœuvring was to replenish his purse at the hands of every one who would listen to his prophecies, even though he were re-

duced to the necessity of making, upon the same subject, different promises to different individuals, allowed her good humour still to increase.

But Miss Alicia was immoveably grave, notwithstanding that her displeasure towards Sir William had evidently subsided. At length she spoke in a tone that surprised both her companions.

"Eliza, my love! I will thank you to seek out for me, in my dressing-room, a parcel of embroidering silk; here are the keys of my drawers. I cannot exactly instruct you in which drawer it is to be found; but you will not spare a little trouble to oblige me. You know, there are particular reasons why I cannot entrust my keys into the hands of a servant.

"Do not doubt my willingness to oblige you, dear Aunt!" said Eliza, affectionately, and yet, as the cause for her aunt's precaution occurred, with a subdued smile. To her knowledge, a carefully-enveloped bundle of Miss Alicia's youthful epistolary correspondence lay under guardianship of the keys given to her; and she had often heard them read, and on the face of them detected affectation and nonsense, such as proved that "the ever-to-be-remembered" lover was as great a fool as the object of his devotion.

So soon as, with her usual graceful air, her niece had left the drawing-room, the old lady took off her spectacles, folded them up, deposited them in their case, beautifully covered with ornamented silk, put the case in her pocket, and pushing her working-frame to a little distance, raised her head, and finally addressed the Baronet:—

"Sir William, I am anxious to know what you think of the words spoken to you to-day by that rather extraordinary person."

"Dearest Madam! I can answer you only by saying, that there is nothing I would not encounter—no trial, no privation that I would not joyfully submit to—if I felt assured, or even hoped, the augury might be fulfilled. Twelve long months is a dreary term to see placed between me and happiness—Oh! could I but experience the delight of calling Eliza mine, after the lapse of a third of that eternity!"

Miss Alicia emitted her systematic long-drawn sigh. The Baronet's rhapsody brought to her mind the last pleadings of her own romantic lover, upon the eve previous to the fated day when he embarked for a foreign land, after vainly urging an abridgment of the probation to which she had doomed him. The recollection of the unfortunate result of her virtuous and dignified obstinacy brought tears of mingled grief and remorse into her eyes, as in a softened voice she answered the Baronet.

"I am an advocate, Sir William, for dignified deliberation in matters of this nature. I regard impatience, on the part of a suitor, as forgetfulness of what is fully due to the female character. The more timid and retreating party cannot have any share in such impatience. If ever she could, I should blush over her, and shrink from her as from something inconceivably disagreeable. Between acquaintance and attachment, a gradual progress ought to take place. The term allowable for the completion of such a progress is not, perhaps, definable; depending, in a great degree, as it does upon natural dispositions, circumstances, and, I believe, opportunity. Nor is it quite necessary that we should establish its precise limits. But again, from attachment to union, a second term of time is properly prescribed; during the lapse of which, mutual tastes and feelings, tempers and propensities, are to be studied, and first impulses weighed, in order that general resemblance may not be confounded with perfect sympathy of character, nor mere inclination with the pure, noble sentiment of true love. This second term we know how more particularly to lay down. In some cases it should extend to three years; in most cases, to two years; and, according to the usual course of attendant events, in no case can it be less than one."—

"Confound your doctrine and yourself!" devoutly muttered the lover; it need not be added, below his breath.

"All ladies who feel what is due from themselves to themselves, will readily, indeed naturally, insist upon a probation, on the part of an admirer, of one or other of these spaces of time. Their self-estimation is manifested, in my judgment, by the number of years for which they stipulate. And no highminded gentleman can surely refuse to embrace the tender servitude imposed upon him. None, certainly, who has a proper view of feminine delicacy and worth, or who is aware of the softening influence, over his manners and disposition, of feminine superiority, so long as it is acknowledged to be such. It is indeed remarkable, that some of the noblest spirits amongst your sex have, in times antecedent to the present, distinguished themselves, by gracefully submitting to prove the stability of their love by a display of its patient durability."

"But, dear Madam, during the period of such a probation, will not the fair arbitress of one's fate, make allowance for the tortures suffered by the lover? The fears, and doubts, and terrors of a thousand things; of the chances of a fit of jealousy, or, perhaps, weariness. Of events, accidents,—say, sickness,—life itself? And, in subjecting a humble and trembling slave to this ordeal, where is the

tenderness, the mercy, the dove-like softness which, we know, ought to characterize the female bosom?"

"If the lover complains, Sir William," answered Miss Alicia, loftily, "he ceases to be the humble and trembling admirer you at first very properly supposed him to be. If one single hour of his stipulated term be marked by selfish impatience, and accusation of his mistress, he at once shows himself unworthy of her, and of the happiness she has conditionally engaged to bestow upon him. And thus, in the detection of his character, and in the exposure of his pretended passion, occurs a real good,—the opportunity for breaking up a connexion that could never lead to felicity, honourable union, and deathless attachment."—

"I pray to have thee put up in 'thrice-ribbed ice,' old lady, worlds away from this genial planet, rather than that my beloved Eliza may imbibe any portion of your nonsense!" cried Sir William, to himself.—But the next words uttered by Miss Alicia put him into a more charitable humour.

"And yet, there are circumstances, out of the general course of things, that may render indispensable, now and then, a slight interruption of the decorum, and of the gradual advance towards a definite end of love proceedings."

"There are, dear Madam!" agreed the Baronet, eagerly about to state a case which he hoped would come under Miss Alice's indulgent views; "and, I think, I can demonstrate that, with regard to me, the dispensing attribute ought to be exercised."

"Favour me with you reasons, Sir William," said Miss Alicia, tranquilly.

"Look at the aspect of the present times," he continued, at a venture.

"Now, indeed, you have spoken to the purpose, my dear Baronet."

"Yes!" Sir William went on, triumphing in his success, and—for the purpose of shaking to its utmost the chord of terror he saw was touched, using the most alarming language he could put together—"yes! Madam, a dreadful convulsion is at hand. A bloody extirpation of all Protestants is meditated by the Papists of the country. Property, rank, distinction, society—every thing may be swept away. Oh! in that coming day of anarchy, amid that hurricane of vulgar and fierce passions, Heaven help the weak and unprotected! and, above all that are doomed to stand exposed to its fury, without competent protectors—Heaven, in its mercies, take [illegible]ssion on the high-born and attractive of the gentle sex!"

"Amen! dear Sir William. Believe me, I have lately been occupied, in reference to the tender topic before us, with a full consideration of such terrible probabilities. Sir William, I am credibly informed by a lady of my acquaintance, Mrs. Whaley, the wife of Captain Whaley, of the Ballybreehoone cavalry, an active man, particularly skilled in fathoming the treacherous intentions of the disaffected, that we stand indeed upon the eve of fearful doings. By most singular sagacity and singular means, the Captain has ascertained the atrocious magnitude of one part, at least, of the appalling plot."

"Extraordinary sagacity, my dear Madam, is not required to come to even more extensive conclusions. The frightful combination of the whole peasantry is too manifest to escape observation. They scarce take the trouble to disguise their ferocious intents towards any house of distinction—particularly such as are graced by female beauty and virtue, in different stages of attraction."

"That the wild wishes and wilder inclinations of the misguided people may take such a scope," said Miss Alicia, growing really alarmed, for she grew pale, "I am, alas! prepared to understand, Sir William. Let me entreat your attention to another of their contemplated outrages.

"It was lately observed by Captain Whaly, that, through every shop in Wexford town, all the red tape had been bought up by the peasantry, in complements of a yard and a half in length. This, naturally and properly, created a vague suspicion of its being about to be used for bad purposes. The Captain, personally, and by humble agents sent through the country, made the necessary inquiries. He was informed that a priest had dreamt the people were soon to be visited by a plague amongst their children; and that this plague was only to be checked by tying round the neck of every child a piece of red tape, previously blessed, as they term it, and sprinkled with holy water. But now mark, Sir William! Captain Whaley applied to the priest of whom the peasantry told this story:—the gentleman solemnly denied having authorized it, or indeed having before heard of it. And at length comes out the dreadful conclusion—namely, that the red tape is tied round the necks of such children as are to be distinguished and saved in the hour of the intended general slaughter of every sex and age of our persuasion. Oh! Sir William—as a young gentleman, a preacher of the gospel, though not in orders in the church, remarked to Mrs. Whaley, at her tea-table, while she told him the story—it seems like 'as the

blood of the paschal lamb was to the Israelites, when the angel of the Lord slew the first-born of the Egyptians."

"Certainly, Madam," said Sir William, with a good affectation of horror in his countenance, "this amounts to a positive proof of the diabolical intents of these blood-thirsty people; and therefore I say—"

"Your pard'on Sir William; permit me to go on:"—Miss Alicia was not perhaps willing to be anticipated in sagacity and foresight. "Since such terrible convulsions are to ensue, and such perils incurred by the weaker of the community in particular, I have been thinking it would be well if Miss Hartley were previously protected as effectually as is possible—"

"Dearest Miss Alicia, a thousand thanks! how good—how kind!"

"Thank me not, Sir William. Nor—much as I esteem you—call me good or kind on your own account.

"On mine, dear Madam! Could I expect it? But will you not allow me to admire the consideration—the wisdom—"

"Say necessity, Sir William, and you say all. On no other grounds but those of the most pressing necessity could my niece, Miss Hartley, or her friends for her, contemplate accepting your protection within the term first prescribed."

"Put it as you wish, dear lady! Heaven has guided your thoughts,—and, for the purpose of leading them to this conclusion, given you the sagacity of superior years, the amiability of an angel, and the affecting tenderness of a careful and anxious parent—You know, Madam, Eliza is in heart and soul your child."

"I will argue with my brother on this subject," said Miss Alicia, in a dignified manner, that saw no necessity for pausing to acknowledge well-merited compliments; "besides Sir Thomas's desire to have his child become a wife at the same age, to a day, which upon a similar occasion her mother had attained, it was chiefly through my influence he allotted, for your very short probation, the original term of one year, Sir William."

"I know it well, absurd old lady!" muttered the tantalized lover; while, outwardly, he acknowledged the truth of the remark, by bending his head amid a profusion of smiles.

"And, I trust, I can therefore sway my brother to our altered views," continued Miss Alicia; "as to Miss Hartley, I scarcely know—if one is to judge by your manner of addressing a middle-aged lady like me—a fitter advocate than yourself. Adieu! Sir William, for the present:—you will excuse me while I attend to the

penning of a letter to a dear friend, which should be ready for this day's post."

"May you enjoy a long and honoured life, dearest Madam!—he arose, and tenderly saluted Miss Alicia's hand—"and may its every moment be marked by the rapture I now feel!"

"Alas! Sir William," plaintively answered the good old lady, "rapture can never be mine. Long since has it been a stranger to my bosom: for nothing do I now look or wish, save a continuance of the peaceful resignation that has so miraculously succeeded to excessive suffering. Yet am I able to sympathize in the happiness of the more fortunate of my species; and upon your happiness, and that of my dear child Eliza, it is with a glowing heart I pronounce my blessing."

Miss Alicia paused in her advance to the door; and, during her last words, reverently laid her hand on the head of her son-in-law elect. Then, half-affectedly struggling to keep down some half-natural tears, she patted with sober dignity out of the room.

The Baronet re-erecting his head from the filial position in which he had stooped it to receive the blessing, burst into a smothered laugh, as he walked quickly about the apartment.

"After all her nonsense," he said, "the old lady knows her duty in a love-case. Fine-drawn as are her notions of female decorum, and all that, she perceives an occasional necessity for leaving people together. And, by the mother of Love! I hear the approach of my divinity: oh! I would know her fairy-step, were I blind and in a desert!"

"Nay, dear aunt," said Eliza, entering at the moment, "you seem to have exercised your utmost ingenuity in hiding that rare bundle of silk. I have searched every shelf, pulled out every drawer, explored——but, bless me, Sir William, where is my Aunt?"

The lover's answer we cannot authenticate; nor has the subsequent discourse, which on this occasion passed between him and his mistress, reached us in a form sufficiently original to warrant our making ourselves accountable for it to the reader. We are only prepared to state generally, that their conversation, of whatever nature it might be, lasted, without a witness, full three-quarters of an hour. About the expiration of which time, they were observed by a third person, who, from what he saw, believed they had been "saying and doing anything but quarrellin' among themsefs."

In fact, the drawing-room door had been left open, (an impro-

vident neglect,) and Tim Reily, wandering idly about the house, and hearing no voices inside, softly entered a step or two, at their backs, cast his eyes around, stopped short, and escaped still more softly than he had intruded, unseen, to the lobby. His lips were screwed up into the form of the letter *O*, as it is printed in italics, and one of his eyes winking, all the while that he moved backward, and when he had gained a safe distance from the drawing-room, Tim, commencing with the ejaculation for which he had kept his mouth prepared, thus soliloquized:—

"Oh—h! oh, ho! sure it's I had the loock of a thousand! Widin the black o' my nail o' playin' the Divil, out-an'-out! His arum round about her, as close as her sash, an', murther! I'd get the truth of a heavy curse from the both, an' I'd desarve it, an' I'd be contented wid the same. There is'nt a boy undher the sun, this moment 'ud like to be baulked worse than myself Tim Reily; an' may I never say *hec-um-pogue, a-chorra-ma-chree!** to a purty crature durin' my days agin—(an' I'd rather fast upon one male a-day than do widout it)—nor she make answer, 'Go along out o' that, you rogue,' (that, as all the world knows, stands for, 'By all manes, a bouchal!') may every bit o' this evil befal me, if any one ever ketches me spilin' their own sport! Is it I? Tim Reily? Ah, no; not himsef, by his conscience!—I'll just give 'em nat'ral time to finish what they're whisperin' about, in the way mysef 'ud finish it, when I'd ketch a hould o' Kitty Gow, supposin'. It wouldn't be three snaps of a finger till the quarrel 'ud be over, an' Kitty sayin', 'It's a shame for you, Tim!' an' I smackin' my lips. But I never had the loock of thryin' wid one of them ladies, but I b'lieve there must be more coaxin' an' takin' of oaths that a body 'ud mane no sich thing; 'Ah! fie,' sure you wouldn't suspect I'd be so bould?' 'Nothin' was farther from my thoughts, your darlin' ladyship!' 'I gi' you my oath down, plump an' plain, I wouldn't do the like for the King of England's crown!'"

Tim spread out his arms and assumed his most coaxing manner; while he repeated slowly and softly these last words, made a sudden stop, affected to engage in a tender contest, drew back his head, and smiled at his own sly cleverness. "Afther all," he continued, "little Kitty Gow has as nice a taste on her lips as any o' ye, I believe; only I wish there was honest manes o' thryin' jest out o' curiosity."

Tim was interrupted by receiving, from the hands of an unknown

* Give me a kiss, darling of my heart.

and strange courier, a letter for Sir William Judkin. Now he really had business into the drawing-room, yet he would not ungenerously hasten thither. He waited until, in his judgment, and even allowing time for the additional pleading to be used when a lady was in question, Sir William had brought matters to a conclusion.

As soon as his reason and conscience became assured on those points, Tim Reily ascended the stairs, and walked to the drawing-room door, with a slow and heavy step, took the lock-handle abruptly in his grasp, and made as much noise with it as was possible. Accordingly, upon his second entrance into the apartment, he had the sly satisfaction of observing that his young lady and her lover sat a reasonable distance asunder, while, from the expression of their countenances, all seemed to have ended just as it should have done.

"'A bit of a letther for your honour; an' 'There's no answer,' says the gowk that gave it."

"From whom did the messenger say it comes?" questioned Sir William.

"'How do I know?' says he, when I axed him; 'Well,' says I, 'if that's all you know about it, don't tell any body, a-bouchal;' an' so he walked off, your honour."

"Very well," resumed the young Baronet, in a low voice, as with particular scrutiny he examined the superscription of the letter. It caught Eliza's eye; she thought she recollected the handwriting, and her heart misgave her.

Asking and obtaining permission, he hastily tore open the letter. After running over its first lines, his eye widened and flashed, his brows gathered, his cheek flamed and suddenly grew very pale, and his teeth set between his widely parted lips. With increased alarm, and some terror of a peculiar kind, Eliza beheld the face that but a moment before had charmed her by its united expression of beauty and happiness, change into deformity and agitation. From the character about her lover's wrinkled brows she shrank in particular alarm; it was terrible, and, as she afterwards said, fiendish. While she continued to watch him, Sir William's features relaxed into a kind of stupor, and his manner indicated that for a moment he forgot her presence. Moisture beaded his forehead; his looks fixed on the floor; his head sank towards his chest; he seemed slightly to shudder. The letter lay open on his knee; and Eliza saw the signature she had anticipated,—that of her old lover, Harry Talbot.

A minute elapsed ere the Baronet showed symptoms of returning presence of mind.

"Dear Sir William," Eliza said, softly, "this letter seems to disturb you."

The young man started, and colored; he crumpled the note in his hand as he replied, with well simulated gaiety:

"No, no, my darling!—It is nothing worthy your gentle interest. It contains nothing of any consequence."

But Eliza was not deceived by his words or manner. She shook her head at him with pretty chiding as she persisted:

"Nay, Sir William, I claim the privilege of feminine contradiction here. I watched your face just now—I will frankly tell you why—because the handwriting of the address had met my eye, and had told me that the writer of the letter was known to me—as—as no friend of yours. I saw your first agitation, and know that it was for my sake you sought to conceal it. But, dear Sir William, if you truly love me, you will not leave me in doubt. You must—*must*, mind!—make me acquainted with the whole contents of this letter."

"Whom do you take to be its writer, Eliza?"

"Harry Talbot!" Eliza answered with a blush.

"Well, dear girl, you are right. And, to please you, I will even do what, under other circumstances, honor would perhaps forbid. But what would I not do at your command, my love!—After all—the matter is absurd enough. The fact is, that my chivalrous rival—" the Baronet smiled contemptuously as he spoke—"threatens me with his high displeasure if I do not forego the rapture of making Eliza Hartley my bride. The young man certainly seems to have a knack of considering himself a very high and imposing personage. We shall see that!—By—pardon me, dear love!—but who could have patience with this empty swaggerer?—Give up such a prize at his insolent bidding?—His threat alone prompts me to hurl the pretender to the distance his presumption warrants. The coxcomb!—the insolent!—the mad fool!" he added, with rising vehemence; "does he think I fear him?"

"Sir William!" Eliza said, as, coming to his side she laid her hand upon that of her lover. "Listen to me. For my sake, let this folly pass. Take no notice of Mr. Talbot or of his absurd letter. You know—you know—for I have kept nothing from you—that he has, perhaps, some reason to resent my—my—" she stopped, confused and blushing deeply.

"Your preference for me, you would say, dearest girl?" the

Baronet said, with a smile and a triumphant flash of his dark eyes, while he fondly clasped her hand between his own. "Poor Devil! I can afford to pity him. Yet I must, in this one instance, disobey you. I am sorry you should have known anything of the matter, but since it has so chanced, I must say to you, that I am not to be outraged and menanced with impunity. Nay, could you, Eliza, trust safely to my future protection, if I forebore to chastise this insolence offered to us both?"

"Aye, and the more securely for such a proof of your affection for me. Yield to my prayer, and you will indeed convince me that I have some real influence over you. Be generous, and—if it be possible—I will love you the better for it!"

Her voice trembled and sank; tears swam in her soft upturned eyes; her lips quivered with emotion. Her lover visibly wavered at the appeal. He averted his head, and made an effort to overcome the effect produced in him by her words.

"My Eliza!" he urged: "this is hardly just to me or to yourself. You should spare me an appeal to which it would be dishonourable to hearken. Do not pledge me to my own shame."

"Grant my prayer, Sir William, and at a future day you will bless me for it;" was the girl's earnest reply. "Dear Sir William, oh, dear love!" her head sank against his shoulder as she added, in a burst of weeping, "doom me not to days of remorse and wretchedness."

The Baronet's answer did not go to prove Tim Reily absolutely correct in his conclusions as to the perfect understanding at which the lovers had arrived.

"Eliza—, difficult as is the sacrifice—upon one condition I will obey you."

"Oh,—name it!"

"Be more explicit, sweet one, in your consent to waive the tiresome probation between me and happiness. Say you will be mine at the very shortest day for which I can obtain your Father's approval. This is my condition. Speak, Eliza, do you accept it?"—

Eliza did not immediately reply, though he bent down eagerly to catch her slightest whisper. Her face was hidden on his arm and she resisted his attempt to raise it. Speaking still more ardently he went on,

"Believe me, love, it is the only way of putting an end to contention between my insolent rival and me. When he sees all hope shut out, he will cease to provoke my vengeance. Say you consent,

Eliza"—And he bent down his head again. This time he caught the softly spoken words—

"I do—I consent."

"Then," the lover exclaimed, as he clasped her to his bosom, "I swear to you to avoid—even should he continue to annoy me—all encounter with this presumptuous and foolish young man. Nay, with this ridiculous transcript of his intemperance," flinging the letter into the fire, "let all thought of my resentment perish for ever!"

"Thank God—thank God!" cried Eliza. And in the warmth of her gratitude, she submitted passively to her lover's ardent caresses.

CHAPTER XI.

A MONTH following the termination of the time of the last chapter, Sir Thomas Hartley was seated in his dining-parlour, *tete-à-tete* with a strange guest. The venerable apartment was solidly wainscotted with shillelagh oak, against which (as is said of the wood-work of the roof of Westminster Abbey, also reputed Irish) the venomous spider of England durst not affix his web. But, however true this assertion may be, the less hurtful, though no whit more ornamental, Irish insect of the same species may, without danger to his life or health, excepting at the hands of the housemaid, (and sometimes he need not fear her either,) append his curious workmanship to any convenient beam or plank of his country's timber. Yet, let it not be inferred that, in the present instance, the venerable wainscot was disfigured by any of those filmy textures which characterize the neglected dwelling, The domestic concerns of Sir Thomas Hartley were too diligently overlooked by Miss Alicia, to allow of such a case. One glance of her keen eye would have detected, in the most remote corner or subtile chink, the mesh of the unsightly spider, or her susceptible ear have distinguished, above all other sounds, the death-buzz of the tortured fly, expiring in the monster's claws.

The cloth had been removed after dinner, and the polished table was cheered and graced by a variety of excellent wines, for which cellars of the host, in common with those of many Irish gen-

tlemen of the time, were deservedly celebrated. In truth, we do not know a country, however it has happened, more likely than our own to submit, now and then, to the palate of the connoisseur, a glass of good old claret.

The strange guest, who sat opposite to Sir Thomas Hartley, we shall not pause to describe, because, though an important and memorable actor on our boards, he was but a passing one,—making a single entrance and exit, and, in conformity with the peculiar system of secresy of those whose agent he proved himself to be, not even leaving a name behind.

Neither is it our purpose to report the whole of a long conversation which for hours after the dispatch of dinner, took place between him and Sir Thomas; or rather, which, in reply to the urging of the stranger upon a certain point, was almost monopolized by the Baronet.

It will be sufficient to take up their discourse towards its close, when, after a long and eloquent harangue from his high-minded and warm-hearted host, explanatory of his refusal to engage in the matter concerning which he had been specially solicited, the stranger remarked:

"Then, Sir Thomas, it is really your intention to forsake, in their present efforts, your old political brethren?"

"It is, Sir," the Baronet replied; "partly for the reasons I have given, partly for others which I can give. Yet, my secession does not occur without regret,—I may add, sorrow, heart-felt sorrow, for the wretched necessity that compels it. Never can I cease to wish ardently, and, I hope, purely, for the independence and happiness of my country: that my judgment and conscience now refuse an exertion in her behalf, is a bitter pang. As a Volunteer officer, in the first epoch of Ireland's glory, I was an enthusiast. Fifteen years have since sobered down my mind, and yet I see no reason to censure my former views and feelings. It was the only period, during a lapse of six centuries, in which Ireland's sons, pausing in their dissensions, united for her good, and therefore seemed capable of serving her. Sir, recollection of that time fills me again with its spirit. The passion of the land was the happiness of the land: in the pursuit of an object so virtuous, it formed the happiness of the people. Have we for ever outlived those days of sunshine?"

"I think we have not, Sir Thomas," answered the stranger. "The coming struggle will be but the storm that breaks and disperses the clouds, to make way for a returning burst of purest sunshine."

"I despair of it, Sir," said the Baronet.

"And yet, Sir Thomas, you say, that even at the suppression of the last of the Volunteers, your opinions and views went the full length of theirs. That, in fact, you were, in 1794, a true United Irishman?"

"I have admitted as much, Sir,"

"May I, then, beg to be favoured, in addition to the arguments you have already adduced, with the final reasons for now regarding as hopeless, an effort you must, at that time, have thought promising?"

"Readily, Sir. At the moment when our proceedings for our country's good changed from open, public remonstrance, into more secret and disguised plans, I freely admit, I had not sufficiently reflected on ultimate results. Spirit and indignation were too much roused to allow of due forecast. Time has since been afforded me for calmer thought, and, I must own, I shrink from the cruel devastations of a civil war, even supposing it engaged in by a union amongst the majority of my countrymen, such as that exhibited by the Volunteers of 1782. I have looked at the proceedings in France, and—let stronger or baser hearts sneer at me, if they will—I shudder at the idea of stalking, even to the shrine of Freedom, through national carnage, ruin, and demoralization. But where is the perfect union supposed? Where the spirit of 1782? Has not our previous discourse shown, that from a variety of causes—some of them the planned workings of bad men,—sect is now set against sect, throughout our miserable land? That the struggle, stripped of all its saving character, cannot therefore be one between Ireland and England, but one between Irishmen and Irishmen—nay, between Christians and Christians, adoring the same God, though hating each other in His Name! Sir, this is a sickening, an unnerving prospect! I could not be a party in such a strife. Hand in hand with my countrymen, of every religious denomination, it is my pride and glory to have once cried out for liberty. But the generous fire of patriotism no longer warms the bosoms of Irishmen. In the present instance, their hearts flame against one another with an impure fire, kindled by a brand that has been snatched from hell."

Sir Thomas, while speaking these words, gave a proof of the strength of his feelings—tears started to his eyes.

"I trust," said his guest, "you anticipate too gloomily, Sir Thomas. That blood must flow, is inevitable. But that the efforts of the conductors of this good cause will succeed in counteracting

the sectarian rancour you dread, I almost as certainly reckon on."

"I see, Sir," answered the Baronet, "you have not examined with, perhaps, the closeness which the case demands, the materials either of your opponents or adherents. That men of improved intellect may refrain from shedding each other's blood, on the mere score of religion, I hope and pray. But that the lower orders, on both sides, will—recollecting their long-cherished hatred, and mutual hopes of extermination or revenge—hesitate in the most atrocious as well as superfluous outrages; that Orangeman will spare Catholic, or Catholic, Orangeman, I cannot, alas! contemplate as possible. And the frightful picture of their common barbarities is ever before my eyes, scaring me from all participation in your cause. Sir, I shrink from the vortex."

"To our deep regret, Sir Thomas. But we expect at least, that, if not ranked at our side, you will stand neuter."

"Such must be my course, Sir. My single efforts could not now arrest the progress of the coming devastation. By the utmost I could do, a few wretches only might be brought to punishment,—even supposing me engaged with those whose policy in my native land I can no more admire than I can consent to join you, or rather your supporters, in whom my religion would, perhaps, arouse a thirst for my death. Alone, therefore, I must abide the storm as I may."

"Have you ever heard, Sir Thomas, that the Cabinet of this country has, long ago, become acquainted with the secret of our confederation against it?" demaded the stranger, in visible asperity.

"I have heard as much, Sir."

"And that they since permit it to go on," continued the guest, in increasing bitterness, "while they organize and impel the very sectarian hatred you so much deprecate,—hallooing different portions of the people against each other, as one of the best means of saving themselves? And has your mind's eye, Sir Thomas, never caught a glimpse, in his closet, of the even pulsed minister, contemplating the gradual workings of this volcano of base passions, and quietly calculating upon its explosion? Has your fancy's ear never caught the unagitated accents of his voice, as throwing his cold eyes over the sea of blood in which our land is to be deluged, he may have said—'Let it be; for across this very tide will I sail triumphant to the harbour of my ambition?'"

"I have not sought so deep, Sir."

"Well; time will show if I wrong him. But it grows late:"

the evening, Sir Thomas, and I claim your promise to accompany me to the house whither my instructions farther point."

"I attend you, Sir."

And upon a dark evening, in the end of February, Sir Thomas Hartley and his guest issued forth together. The unsuspecting Baronet had better have remained at home.

CHAPTER XII.

It was for the residence of a person often mentioned before in the progress of this story, that Sir Thomas Hartley and his guest set out on foot. We allude to the smith of the district, John Delouchery, or, as he was familiarly termed, Shawn-a-Gow—that is, Jack the Smith.

In a country district, in Ireland, the smith is a person of no little importance. He has the credit of being an artisan, whose surprising ingenuity and well-directed blows form, into various articles necessary for agriculture, the unshapely bar of iron. He is the hamlet farrier, too: he bleeds and prescribes for horses. Nay, by a very simple transmission of confidence, founded, unconsciously it may be, upon a comparison of animal economy, there appears no reason why he should not cure his neighbours as well as their beasts. Hence he may be allowed, amongst his humble friends, a rank parallel to that enjoyed, in a more exalted society, by physicians of regular degree.

His forge enjoys almost as much consideration as himself; being a kind of temple of fame, where the youths of the neighbourhood may, with profit to their characters, give publicity to their names. It is customary—indeed a matter insisted on, that the farmer who sends a piece of iron to be fabricated at the smithy, shall send with it a boy or lad, his son, or his most able-bodied young labourer, to wield the heavy sledge, while "the Gow," with his less ponderous hammer, gives the judicious fashioning blow. According to his opinion of his assistant's strength of sinew, the presiding artist has it in his power to stamp, creditably or otherwise, the rising pretensions of the youth. For, however attractive to city taste may appear the mincing pace, straitened waist, and nerveless arm of the dandy, a solid tread, strong and broad muscles, and ability

to work at any one thing from sunrise to sunset, and dance till sunrise again, if the opportunity turn up, are qualities regarded by less enlightened eyes, as indicative of praiseworthy manhood.

Many advantages are attached to the smith's establishment. Upon setting out in the world, when he requires a little help, his wife and children have the privilege of preceding all gleaners in the new-reaped field. At a convenient season of the year, he can call upon the farmers to supply their horses and cars to draught home fuel for his furnace. He is a friend of all good fellows, or, more properly, all good fellows are friends of his: how can he help being very often thirsty? And so, neighbours most commonly "treat him," and the dram, or draught of beer, that whizzes down his hot throat, seems a matter of right to which he inherits a claim.

His laboratory is scarce ever destitute, particularly upon winter's nights, of chatty folk, who assemble round his ever-roaring fire, partly to stretch their hands and chins over its grateful blaze, partly to indulge the gregarious and talkative instinct of their nature. Politicians, too, very often constitute such circles, by whom grievances are discussed, remedies suggested, and associations formed, that tend to break up the quiet of a whole district, and bring their and ignorant promoters to the gibbet. But never, it will be presumed, at any period before or since, were the smithies of Ireland so often put in requisition as during the eventful time of our story. Under cover of the anvil's sound, which rung with the fabrication of weapons doomed to work out their desperate projects, revengeful conspirators assembled every evening, or, rather, every night, to hold whispering and husky talk on the coming struggle, and shape it to their own sanguine and short-sighted policy.

Along with the consciousness of superiority conferred upon Shawn-a-Gow by his calling and rank in life, he was, by nature, one who held a high opinion of himself. His words were few; but, if they came only by intervals, Shawn thought, and others thought, too, that their pith made up for their scarcity.

His stature approached the gigantic. He had a black beard, and, by virtue of his trade, a black face. His arms, when bared for working, were coils of muscle and sinew, not unworthy of the Farnese Hercules, with appended to them—for they seemed too weighty even for such arms to wield—a pair of great, broad, bony, black fists, of which it was said, that one good blow would bring to his knees the stoutest ox that ever bellowed. And the innate pride of his physical ponderosity might have assisted Shawn in standing well in his own opinion.

He was a man of substance, too, and dignity of bearing became him. From his youth, Shawn had been no idler, and he possessed a wife whose steady and thrifty habits turned his earnings to a good account. Between them they were proprietors of an establishment, by the agency of which, his customers could treat him to his own ale or whiskey, and pay the reckoning to Mrs. Gow. This was the sign of "The shoeing horse;" one very appropriate to both branches of Shawn's business. The artist to whom the world was indebted for this effort of the pencil, had studied Shawn himself as the original of the shape, in the act of shoeing the horse; and, while he chuckled over his work, declared it "the living image of the Gow." None others, his wife excepted, could, however, trace the likeness. After remaining a long time silent, Shawn admitted, "it was as like him as the other thing was like a horse; an' that was saying as much as could be said for it." We are compelled to add, that the arms and legs seemed to originate from points a little out of natural conformation, and displayed, moreover, nothing of the herculean solidity of the real subject. As to the face, we profess no surprise at the limner's failure, in this particular, for, with equal hope of catching the features of his original, he might set about pourtraying the vissage of a man in a mask, as attempt the delineation of Shawn's countenance, disguised as he was beneath the black crust superinduced by the smoke and vapour of his furnace.

Shawn-a-Gow had a son and daughter: he loved both with a steady, taciturn regard, that was, perhaps, more sterling than if it had been demonstrative. He had been but a few days out of his apprenticeship—some thirty years ago—when on a fine Sunday, lying on his back in a meadow, and playing, as the Irish termed it, "*Bullagh lea gaeehan*," that is, "the breast to the sun," he began,—now that he was an established artisan, escaped from seven years' fiery ordeal, to reflect upon the steps necessary to be taken for getting on in the world.

He resolved upon matrimony, as soon as it could be attained. In consideration of his being a tradesman, he should get a fortune with his wife. Within twelve months at farthest, from his wedding-day, he would be the father of a son. Thirteen years afterwards that son would be able to work in the forge, and add to his profits the produce of the labour of an additional hand. And there would be another son, and another at least. By the time he had become fifty years old, he could subsist on their united efforts, and consecrate to luxurious ease the rest of his life. Accordingly, Shawn did marry, quite to his expectations and tastes, if not be-

yond them. The pretty, smiling, quiet daughter of the widow Runehan, whose public house was of old standing, became his wife. He had speculated on a spouse that would not say no, if it happened to be his pleasure to say that "the moon was made of green cheese;" and so far Bridget Runehan fully gratified his views and wishes.

About the time he had at first reckoned on, (Providence so far seeming resolved that Shawn should have his way,) his partner became a mother. He calmly awaited the result, for his mind was made up to it. A daughter was presented to him. Those who watched him, and knew Shawn's humour, deemed that he was sorely vexed. But, in consideration of its being a first offence, he said nothing.

A second *accouchement* appeared very probable. He sought a moment of serious conversation with his wife, and warned her, on pain of his displeasure, to supply him with a son. She engaged to the utmost of her power to obey her husband, but failed notwithstanding. As soon as she was able to bear the reasonable chastisement warranted by the law of England, it is true that Shawn reminded her of his threat.

The next time he felt little uneasiness. Full precautions had, he argued, been taken to bring his spouse to a sense of her duty. But a daughter still appeared; and the terrified mother, in order to gain time, at least, from his indignation, counselled her nurse to misrepresent the fact. He was in great glee, called his wife "a good girl at last," and laid out extravagantly for the christening.

But when the priest came, and that the child's name was pronounced, not even the expedient of hiding it in Latin could deceive Shawn's ear. He grew furious. The mother had spoken confidentialy to the clergyman, and engaged him on her side, and the good man exerted his eloqnence to convince Shawn of the sinfulness of combatting the will of God. All the neighbours, and particularly all the neighbours' wives, joined in the exhortation, and he was worried into an unwilling promise that, for this time, the poor woman should go unpunished. But Shawn swore an oath, in reference to future contingencies—and when they occurred, so far as he was allowed, he kept it. In fact, upon the announcement of a fourth daughter, half a dozen friends, who saw him rush into the forge for his hammer, saved him, by intercepting the obstinate madman at the threshold of his wife's chamber, from the commission of some wild and perhaps dreadful act.

As if his presumption had now been sufficiently punished, Providence, upon the next occasion, really vouchsafed him a male heir, who

was estimated and beloved by his father in proportion to his former anxiety and disappointments. And now his unlucky and untimely daughters died one by one, and Shawn, though not showing as much grief at their burial as he had done at their birth, still, to the surprise of his friends, seemed sorry for them.

Mrs. Gow's last confinement produced, however, a daughter still, and he took advantage of the opportunity to evince his appeased return to natural feelings, and bestowed on the little smiling innocent a father's answering smile in return for hers.

As the boy grew up, Shawn, having acquired wealth in the world, thought it a pity to make a slavish smith of him, particularly as he gave indications of talent beyond that required to shape a horse-shoe out of a bar of iron. Consequently, his darling was educated for the priesthood. As to his only surviving daughter, the same Kitty Gow to whom allusions have heretofore been made in these chapters, he loved her with a selfish love; was very loath to part with her; and once declared, after a fit of lengthened taciturnity, by his forge-fire, that the man destined to win and wear Kitty Gow, and her mother's purse, should be worth something, and a likely fellow into the bargain.

The reader will please to remember the name of a certain Davy Moore, "the waver, son to Molly Beehan, who was the daughter of ould Davy Beehan, the great reed-maker," as, in her last conference with our heroine, Nanny the knitter described him. It will farther be borne in mind that, also, according to Nanny's report, he was about to become enlisted, at his mother's instance, in the train of the suitors of pretty Kitty Gow. Accordingly, upon the evening when Sir Thomas Hartley held with his stranger guest the conversation mentioned in the last chapter, Davy Moore appeared seated in the kitchen of Shawn-a-Gow. He had come a-wooing.

Although but approximating to forty years of age, Davy looked older. He was a large unwieldy man, possessed of great latent strength, but unconscious of the fact. Neither his glance nor his bearing betrayed any self-knowledge that he was an individual whom many might fear: on the contrary, he shambled along as if afraid of every body and everything he encountered. This arose from the continual apprehension he was in, of evil to be sustained from supernatural enemies. If his colourless face, that showed pretty nearly the dingy yellow and the unequal surface of a honeycomb, expressed any thing, and if his large, round, protruding grey eyes, ever denoted any particular state of mind, the one was nervous inanity, and the other, a mystified state of brain. His intel-

lects, cloudy by nature, were even still more confused by vague dreams of preternatural agency. He thought—(if ever he thought)—nay, he lived rather amid the terrible bustle of imagined beings, than among the fellow-creatures around him. Upon all subjects, excepting this one, he had not an idea. His mother, and the public too, deemed him, however, a good workman; and certainly he wrought a piece of linen well. But his success was as purely mechanical as that of the apparatus, of which he might be considered as forming a part. When both were once in motion, they unconsciously got through their compound duty: but the more intellectual operation of—as it is called—"fixing his tackle in the loom," always fell to his mother. To that point of ingenuity he never reached.

Such was the wooer whom a parent's credulous partiality deemed entitled to a favourable reception from the blooming, the smart, and the wealthy Kitty Gow, or Kitty Delouchery. Wealth, as well as every thing else, is comparative, and Kitty was affluent for her sphere in life.

Davy, of course, came dressed in his best clothes; and, according to his mother's arrangement, Nanny the Knitter met him, as a necessary auxiliary upon the field of enterprise. Though, as may be recollected, from a former admission of the old match-maker, a conscientious discharge of duty, proportioned to her professional fee, rather than any hope or even desire of a happy result, formed, on the present occasion, Nanny's motive of action.

Side by side, she and Davy sat on the ample kitchen "hob." A third person, not an inmate of the family, occupied a chair in the middle of the apartment. He had just driven up to the door a small cart of linen and woollen goods, and appeared to be a kind of itinerant travelling merchant, or pedlar on a grand scale. If his dress, phrase, and manner might be trusted, he was a Quaker. One of his eyes seemed to have met with an accident, for he wore a black patch over it.

The unobtrusive and subdued-looking wife of Shawn-a-Gow, who had been so unlucky in thwarting her husband with a succession of daughters, sat behind a counter, at one side, seriously engaged in repairing her despot's hose. Kitty, the sly, laughing Kitty, was brewing whiskey punch, from one jug to another, close to her mother's elbow, merrily glancing, now and then, at the curious wooer Nanny had brought to seek her favour, and of whose coming the old woman had forewarned her.

The double-charactered apartment occupied by all, gave a good

"Faix, I b'lieve, honest girl, you'll do mighty well entirely. Give us the worth o' this white thirteen o' dhrink; an' sure, that won't be bad for a body."

"Why, the worth o' this will make you tipsy, Davy, my boy."

"Who cares, by gonnies! An' there's another to back it, that my mother doesn't know about, your sowl."

"An' what drink will you have, Davy?"

"Give us some ale at the first settin' out, for I'm dhry."

"Verily, friend, observed the Quaker; "the words of thy mouth bespeak the parched state of thy inner man."

"Oh! I am as dhry as a fish, by gonnies!" said the weaver, in heavy ecstasy at the anticipation of a treat he had not for a long time, nor very frequently, at any time, indulged in. Kitty brought him a foaming measure, which, at a breath, he gulped down, while she stood observing him, and awaiting his farther address.

"An' won't you sit down wid us, Kitty, my honey pet?" asked Nanny the Knitter, conscientiously, though reluctantly, commencing her professional duties.

"If Davy Moore was to ax a body, maybe I might, Nanny."

Davy, his out-bulged eyes staring at vacuity, was breathing after his draught, and enjoying the interior progress of the good ale.

"Why don't you have manners, Davy?" queried the Knitter, captiously, "an' ax the purty pet to plank hersef near you?"

"Comely maiden," quoth the Quaker, "perhaps thee would'st choose a seat within enjoyment of the full bounty of the fire."

"Next to theeself is it, Sir?"

"Yea! where thee shalt be comforted."

"By word o' mouth, that 'ud make a body understand thee?" slily looking her meaning.

"Verily, by the persuasion of lips will I instruct thee!" and the man's lips seemed to quiver, and his unpatched eye to glitter in anticipation.

"An thee'd give me a ribbon, I'll go bail?"

"Even the choicest of my assortment."

"Sure, I know that, Sir. An' a hankerchief of raal Barcelony?"

"The best of the bale, likewise."

Kitty laughed jeeringly, and replied, "For all your thee's and thou's, friend, I b'lieve you're a big rogue among the poor girls. 'Smooth wather runs deep;'—you know the rest yoursef. But here's honest Davy Moore doesn't fear that ould sayin'."

Davy had just capsized his vessel; and, in order to drain the

last drop, was presenting its nadir point to the zenith. "Give us another o' the full o' this, a-lanna!"

Kitty speedily served him, then turned to withdraw,

"Come here, honest girl!" he continued; "mysef wants to be spakin' to you."

"Here I am for you, Davy," she answered, sitting down in great glee. An' now say it to my face, whatever it is."

"* *Cugger, cugger, a-lanna:* Sure my mother lets me come from the work, on the head o' coortin' you."

"An' a brave hand you're at the coortin', I'll go bail, Davy."

"You're a clane pet of a darlin'," observed Davy, with much of the air of an automaton that could speak. Pretty Kitty smiled as she recognised the phrase of Nanny the Knitter, who, no doubt, adept as she was in soft words, had schooled Davy for the present occasion.

"It's the liquor you're flattherin' now, Davy. That's as plain as the fire afore us."

"No, bud it's your own purty sef he manes," put in Nanny the Knitter, in order to give her pupil time to recover from his second draught. "An' wouldn't he be a goose, an' a gandher, that's worse, to talk that a-way to muddy barley-wather, wid the comely, nice Kitty Gow, by the side of him, that 'ud make a toothless grandaddy, dance a double horn-pipe to plaise her."

"Verily it seemeth unto me," observed the Quaker, that the elder woman is the suitor, rather than my worthy brother in warp and weft."

Kitty laughed, and Nanny replied sharply,

"Meddlin' people doesn't always come off wid thanks, Sir. Let you go poke your fox's snout where there's geese that won't know you, my honey."

"Peace be between us, good mother," answered the Quaker, meekly.

"Well; keep givin' your one eye to your own concarns, Sir, an' we'll have no rubbins' wid any o' your sort:" and Nanny glanced meaningly over his quaintly attired person.

"You're my honey, pet of a darlin', I tell you, Kitty Delouchery," resumed Davy, when he had recovered his breath. "An' I want to be coaxin' you, the way you'll be married to mysef, this Shroft."

"Throth, Davy," answered Kitty, "an' sure you're in haste, good boy. It isn't every one 'ud have me that way, without lookin'

* Whisper, my dear.

closer. 'Maybe you wouldn't like me as well by Asther-Sunday as you would on Shrofe-Tuesday; an' then you could'nt get rid o' me so asy."

"But, lo!" said the Quaker, "I would yearn to befriend honest Davy. If thy way and his way lay separate, behold I would come up with thee upon thine, fair Kitty, and thou shouldst find in me a cherisher, even one to cleave unto thee."

Kitty affected not to hear this speech, but Nanny was severe upon it.

"Bad manners to you, I say—an' that prayer was hard for you afore. Merry Asther to me, if you war lookin' at the way your bad words agrees wid your ugly face, an' the simple dhress that's on your rogue's skin, you'd hate a pretendher—becase he comes o' the worst o' people."

"Not to the elder have my words been spoken," said the man. "Wherefore, I say again, let not wrath come between us."

"To me?" queried Nanny, in a shrill tone; "*That* for you!" and she dipped the top of her finger in a glass of ale Davy had given her, and held out a drop to the Quaker's view. "That for you, an' for all o' your sort!"

"Tell me, Davy," interrupted Kitty, "who put you upon coortin' me in such a hurry?"

"My mother it was that put me on it," answered the suitor. "She tould me to come over when the piece was worked; an' she made me dress myself in my grogram grey an' all. By gonnies, coortin' is plaisin' enough," looking affectionately at the pewter pot—"an' my mother 'ill larn you to fix the tackle in the loom, Kitty, so she will."

"There's good arnin' o' the money there, observed Nanny, speaking in a low tone, to avoid the Quaker's observation—"good arnin' o' the money, every day in the year. An' there's the good acres that goes wid the house—an ould take; and ready tilled, an' the crop lookin' well. An' there's the cow in calf."

"An' my mother," added Davy, in obedience to a hint from Nanny's elbow, "has, I don't know how mooch, in a stockin', Kitty an' she'll power it into your lap."

"I'm tould for a thruth, Davy, that the cow is bewitched?" remarked Kitty, keeping a very serious face.

"Oh-a! oh-a!" ejaculated Davy—"An' I tied the red rag to her tail, the day she came to us, becase the other cow was overlooked to a sart'nty."

"It's no such thing, Kitty, my honey," said the Knitter. "I seen her wid my own eyes, an' she's thrivin' to look at."

"But you couldn't know by lookin' at her, Nanny; and them that tould me has the knowledge. Morebetoken, Davy, tell me one thing. When were you in Sculloch-Gap?"

"Oh-a! I was comin' through it last Sunday week, Kitty."

"An' did you meet any thing on your way?"

"Oh-a! did I? Sure I did! There was throops o' them comin' over my path, an' they war knittin' the grass afore me, to throw me. Bud there was one o' them, a little ould woman like, an' she was loosenin' the knots, to get me off, an' let me go."

"I knew all that afore, Davy."

"Oh-a! how?—oh-a—"

"An' the same body that tould me o' your cow bein' bewitched, tould me into the bargain, that the little ould woman you met in Sculloch-Gap untwisted the grass for you, becase she loves an' likes you, an' has an eye on you for herself. She'd rune any one that 'ud be goin' inside of her, wid you! Bud, here 's the very body that tould me all, now crassin the thrashold. Don't purtend I spoke to you about it, for your life, Davy."

Nanny did not listen and look on without her usual discrimination. She perceived that Kitty Gow was indulging, at the expense of the credulous Davy Moore, in her usual pleasant bantering, and Nanny's former bad omen of the result of the matrimonial treaty became confirmed. But, to protect her own interests, she did not fail to remind Davy, in a whisper, that he was bound to testify at home, how faithfully and cleverly she had abetted his cause.

The person who now entered has before been presented to the reader. It was no other than the redoubted Rattling Bill: dice-thrower, conjuror, fortune-teller, surgeon, and so forth. With all the sauciness which distinguished his mien and features, he swaggered into the kitchen, and stood an instant in the middle of the floor. His position had scarcely been assumed, when from a hurdle of twisted osiers, in a corner between the door jamb and the screen wall, that formed a roost for some of the domestic fowl, a tiny imperfect crow was heard, like that of a juvenile cock just beginning to acquire his note of authority over his harem.

Bill started a little, bent a severe eye upon the hurdle, and growlingly addressed the dame of the house, who, yet seated behind her counter, seemed devoting the whole powers of her mind to the repairs of her husband's hose. Perhaps she had good reason

for strict attention to the wants and comforts of the moody Shawn-a-Gow.

"I say, misthress, twist the head of that hen that's afther crowin', if you'd have loock in the house. An', the Duoul take her carcass, when the head's off, that couldn't let me pass her civilly! Or, get you up out o' that, ould Nanny, an' go help to do the job."

"By all manes, my honey," said Nanny, with remarkable alacrity; "an' why not—if the sate was the best in the world, an' poor Nanny the owner."

"So you've come a coortin, Davy Moore," continued Bill, addressing the disconcerted weaver, who, from the moment the conjuror appeared, had looked frightened, but was quite petrified with the supernatural crowing of the hen. "An' it's to Kitty Gow you're come? *You* won't have him, Kitty; *dhar-a-lourśa*, * an' that's well for you! Davy is bespoke by another; an' if you said 'yes,' she'd turn your mouth up to your ear, in no time."

Kitty looked truly surprised. At the expense of her curious lover, she had invented the story of the old fairy's *penchant* for him; her ascertion that Rattling Bill told it to her, was a fib. Yet, now the conjuror's allusions seemed to drift the same way, and his ensuing words startled her still more.

"Yes; poor Davy Moore must marry wid the fairies o' Sculloch-Gap. There is one o' them called Moya Creetha, becase she has a hump on her back, that must have him; an' that will never let him go till she withers the marrow in his bones. What d'you say to that Davy?"

"Oh-a! what 'll I do, what 'll I do!"

"Make a friend o' one that's able to save you. Is there any thing in this quart?"

"Oh-a! not a dhrop."

"Pull out your money, an' fill it, then."

"Oh-a! I gave the one shillin' my mother put in my pocket to the honest girl there!"

"Now—'nations to you, you *bosthoon!* Where 's the other shillin' you thieved out o' the blue cup in the cupboard?"

"Murther!—yes—it's a sart'n thruth I done it."

"Well, out wid it!"—Davy, moaning in fright, put the shilling into Bill's hand.

"Here, Kitty, give us the worth 'o this, in smokin' punch, by the Piper! Sarv'nt kindly, Sir," turning to the Quaker, who, with his single eye, had been very inquisitively studying Bill.

* By the book.

"Now, you think I'm a quare sort of a fellow—an' so I am. But you don't know what the Dnoul I'm about."

"Friend, it concerneth not me to know."

"Well; I have the advantage o' you, then. Seldom I haven't o' the neighbours, one with another, to tell the thruth." He lowered his voice, and stooped to the Quaker:—"tip us your fist!" He took rather than received the man's hand, held it in his own left, closed the fingers and extended the thumb of his right, and then chucked it at the point where both form an angle, against the answering point in the hand of the stranger. "Isn't that the right touch?" he continued, as still continuing the contact, he might be observed gently to scrape his little finger against the other's palm:—"isn't it? But no matter, now—sure I know nothin' about it, if you like. Never fear me! I'm thrue to the back bone; may————" he uttered a tremendous imprecation,)—"if I'm not!"

"Friend, I nothing understand thee," said the seemingly astonished Quaker.

"Phoo! phoo! never mind, man. There is a time for knowin', an' a time for keepin' the winkers on."

"Is that hen killed?" he asked Nanny, who was whispering with Mrs. Delouchery.

"It's past our skill, my dear sowl, to tell which of 'em crowed at you," said the dame.

"Haven't you a bracket hen among 'em?"

"Why, then, faix we have!" answered the dame, looking at Nanny, who, in reply, elevated the knobs of flesh that supplied the place of eyebrows, above her almost whiteish eyes.

"Well, let me at her, an' I'll soon put her from crowin' again, the next time she sees me."

"Jack Delouchery 'ill be bringin' me to the fore about it, when he misses the hen," said the dame, in an alarmed accent. But Nanny, mounting on a stool, pulled down the screaming offender.

"Would he dare be fraptious about it? Give her here, ould Nanny, an' lave the job to me." He seized the hen, made some motions in display of the deed he was about to commit, and instantly presented his victim without a head, while blood trickled from her neck.

"Now she's done for! But when the head's off, an' the bad blood spilt, that's enough. So, misthress, to keep quiet, as well as loock, in the house,—here—here's your bracket hen, safe an' sound again." And flinging the same bird on the floor, she

appeared re-endowed with her head, and stalked and stared about, as if she had just returned from the other world.

There was a general shudder amongst the spectators, the Quaker excepted, who still kept his good eye upon Bill's motions. Davy Moore groaned aloud, and with looks of stolid terror glared upon the hen, as she continued to mope about, stretching her neck, and peering at every thing, so much after the fashion of a stranger to the house, that it was firmly concluded, either that she had got a new head, to which the objects around were unknown, or was but a receptacle for something bad, thus hellishly introduced into the family.

"Put her on the roost," cried Bill. But no one ventured to obey him. On the contrary, whenever the animal approached them, Nanny, Mrs. Delouchery, and Kitty, edged off to the opposite side of the apartment,—and Davy almost cringed into the fire from her.

"Hah! hah!" laughed Bill, "you're a purty set o' cowards. Come here, you jade!" The hen, acknowledging his acquaintanceship and control, strode towards him like a familiar. He took her up, and, seemingly whispering a word or two at her ear, placed her on the roost, where for some time a great uproar ensued, as if its other tenants felt averse to the intrusion of a strange visitant. "The ginger," and "the black currickeen," pecked furiously at the bracket, but she as furiously returned their assaults, and was soon the victor, causing them to poke down their heads and keep silent. Then, elated with her conquest, she stood up on her perch, clapped her wings, and all expected another crow, when—

"Do, if you daare!" cried Bill; and, cackling gently, she settled herself for repose.

"Divil a purtier hand, or a comelier colleen, havin' that same hand to her shoulder, ever said *thage egh*, wid a matther o' whiskey-punch!"—he went on, re-seating himself close by Davy, on the hob, as he took the smoking jug from Kitty, and placed a glass for his entertainer. "I won't be the worse friend o' yours, Davy Moore," Bill continued, "for havin' this undher my belt. *Shadhurth*, man! the same to your neighbour," nodding to the Quaker. "Mistress Delouchery, here is your health. Kitty you darlin', if it's a thing you're set upon havin' Davy Moore, I'll pull him from little Moya Creetha for you. I care no more for all the *Sheeogs* in Sculloch-Gap than I do for a wran's sneeze—an' well they know that!" He swallowed his glass of punch: but the action scarce interrupted his brawling volubility.

"Hould your glass, Davy."

"Dhrink it all, yoursef, an' a thousand welcomes."

"Phoo, man! hould here, I tell you"—snatching the glass—"that will do. Maybe your reverence wid the big hat 'ud try a *gawlogue?*"*

"Friend, I thirst not, and therefore choose to say nay to thy bounty."

"By the Piper! you might choose worse, then. Sich a thing as a cowld lodgin' an' a hemp cravat, if Captain Whaley an' his yeomen had other people's knowledge. Bud, to the Duoul wid him an' them! It's not that I mane, Sir; bud, in your country, they're given to oaten-maal broth, after the fashion o' the starved Scotch rawbones they come from. No offence, Sir—mind, I'm not spakin' to you at all, if you'd rather o' the two I wouldn't."

We did not at first mention that the Quaker had that peculiar harshness of accent which to Southern Irish ears denotes a native of Protestant Ulster.

"Here's a toast for you—an' my heavy curse on whoever wouldn't send it down—here's Erin go-bragh, every day she gets up!—Davy, the liquor is making me love you more an' more;" he continued in a confidential under-tone to his terrified neighbour, clutching him by the knee, and leaning across him—"Don't you think you see afore you the boy that's able to stand up for you, if Poll Moore, the mother, 'ill show us the inside of the stockin'?"

"Oh-a," answered Davy, "my life is in your hands."

"Well, never fear bud I'll bring you over it. Only be said by me."

At this moment, Sir Thomas Hartley and the mysterious guest in whose company we have seen him issue forth from Hartley Court, entered Shawn-a-Gow's kitchen, attended by our humble acquaintance Tim Reily. The Quaker arose as they appeared, and Rattling Bill caught a look of recognition between him and Sir Thomas's stranger guest. After which, he stooped for a small portmanteau that had lain on the floor, by his side, and passed out of the apartment by the door we have mentioned as leading to a more remote and private room of the house.

"This is the house you seek," said the Baronet, speaking low to his companion. "From the conversation which has passed between us, you fully know my sentiments, and must infer that I cannot consider myself free to share secrets, where I decline to be an ad-

* A guzzle.

herent. My servant attends you, and I will not retire to rest till you return safely to Hartley Court."

"Sir Thomas," answered the stranger, "I feel not the smallest doubt of your honour, so far as I have given you our confidence. I only regret that we cannot have the support of a gentleman so influential, and so deservedly revered. Yet, think more, and closer on the part you will take. Characters such as your's are those we anxiously desire to name amongst us;—men, whose opinions must, even in a physical sense, reach far, and who would also be able to wield and restrain the fury of a revengeful populace. But this is no place, and no time, to confer on such topics. Nor will I trespass on you to await my return at Hartley Court. Your servant's attendance will be quite sufficient; as, in truth, I shall only require my horse, after this business, to push on, under cover of night, upon my prescribed route. Farewell, Sir Thomas Hartley. Here we separate, with acknowledgments, on my part, of high respect for your person, and gratitude for the kindly hospitality of your mansion."

They shook hands and separated accordingly; the stranger thoughtfully walking across the floor, without glancing at either side, and then entering the passage through which the Quaker had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXI.

In the confidential apartment of the rustic tavern, the Quaker, his broad-brimmed hat doffed, was already seated at a deal-table, in company with four others. All our purposes are served by remarking, that five out of the six seemed ofthe class of Irish gentlemen farmers. They were respectably attired in top-boots, and in cloth of good texture, soberly varied in hue, according to the taste of each wearer; and had impressed upon them the look and air of good living, of easy circumstances, and of long intercourse in a rank of life aptly termed decent, and sometimes genteel, according to the relative rank of the individuals who make the comment.

These five conspirators are doomed to pass away from our view as soon as the chapter closes. But with the sixth, exclusive of the Quaker, we shall have some continued encounters: he is, therefore, entitled to more particular notice.

Indeed, even his remarkable contrast with his companions might of itself demand particular description. He was a very little man, not more than five feet two inches in height; with, upon his head, a curious species of full-bottomed wig, deriving its name from a great truss of goat's-hair, frizzed out, with much care and labour, into a round, hard mass, that rested upon the coat-collar; and, in turn, allowed to rest upon it, at four inches from its under-edge, the hat of its wearer. His coat was good broad-cloth, of that colour termed, "pepper-and salt," single-breasted, with a gradually sloping cut backwards from the breast, and terminating in long heavy skirts, showing mitred pocket-flaps, that reached to the middle of his legs. This coat was emblasoned with real silver buttons, each the size of half-a-crown, having engraved upon them the initials "P. R.," for Peter Rooney; and for the last thirty years they had adorned in succession all his Sunday coats. His waistcoat was red, curiously wrought with elaborate silk flourishes along the front-edges, and around the pockets, and the borders of the ample flaps. A thickset small-clothes, so made as (pretty well) to keep its place without the new-fangled aid of braces, had mother-of-pearl buttons at the knees, was tightly-clasped with silver-buckles, and showed to perfection, through his blay thread hose, a well turned though tiny leg; yet retaining, after fifty years' service, its muscular plumpness.

Peter Rooney, naturally grave, had a sagacious and self-respecting look; not that owlish cast of countenance that, as Bacon says, would 'seem wise,' but one that, although sedate, and often proud, bespoke reflection and intelligence, creditable to his state in life and opportunities for acquirement.

As the person who had parted from Sir Thomas Hartley entered, all stood up; and their salutes and manner evidently acknowledged a superior. Yet he shook hands all round, carelessly or naturally, it might be deemed by a looker-on: but under the accost of good-fellowship was secretly interchanged with each, the same signal of intelligence, and of political recognition, which Rattling Bill had proffered to the seeming Quaker. Which very individual it was who, having laid aside his green patch, first addressed the meeting. Both his eyes appeared equally keen and speculative, and his accent, too, sounded more distinctly northern than when he had modified it by the over-done smoothness of the Quaker's phrase and intonation. "This, my good friends!" he said, "is the gentleman without a name, to meet whom I empowered Peter Rooney to summon you together."

"And I come amongst you, gentlemen, dispatched by those higher in trust than I am,—of whose names I know and ask to know as little as you do of mine,—to ascertain, from respectable and sensible persons, the progress the cause has made in your neighbourhood since the last orders. All of you, gentlemen, have been sworn in, in Dublin?"

"All, Sir, at different times, as business took us up to town," answered one of the gentlemen-farmers, "by the Committee at 72, Stephen's-green, of whom Mr. Mac Nevitt was one."

The ex-Quaker nodded assent.

"We understand each other, then," resumed the important visitor. "Through our friend, Mr. Mac Nevitt, my claims on your confidence are fully proved, and my reliance and trust in you also established. So, to business: and, to commence regularly, let us consult the map of the county."

"You 'll plaise, Sir," said little Peter Rooney, sedately, "to hould in your mind, that the Upper-baronial, I may call it, (though it's not, all out, of accord with the system follied in other parts, farther North)—is held on this side o' the Slaney river."

"I understand you, Mr. Rooney, You style this, after our approved plan, an Upper-baronial meeting."

"Yes, Sir; in regard of the decency that's in it."

"And by this side of the Slaney, you mean, of course, the east side."

"The exact thing, Sir. We're now sittin' in Upper-baronial, in the County Wexford, on the ground that's to the east o' the Slaney wather."

"And a very necessary piece of information that is, Mr. Rooney."

"An' for rason o' that, Sir, I spoke the word; I was never given to be loquacious to no purpose! Will you set your eye upon thravellin', Sir, from Bunclody, Sir, the town that you ought to see about two miles, or thereaway, to the head o' where this Upper-baronial is houldin' its sittin', an' then, down again to ould Ross; an' from Bunclody (which is called, morebetoken, Newtown-Barry, by raison its landlord is a Curnel o' that name, as bitther a foe to liberty an' poor Ireland, as ever tuck the book to swear allegiance to King George.) I wish you'd hould it in your mind, Sir, to have his lands, an' his goods, an' his chattels, confiscated back again to the right owners, when the Three o' Liberty is flourishin' in our counthry."

The stranger smiled at Peter's hint, and observed in reply, "Men will change with measures, Mr. Rooney."

"'I'm without sense, Sir, if Curnel Barry 'ill be one o' them men. I had a dalin' wid him, onct, in the way o' my thrade; I made a breeches for him. By a chance it cum about; as I 'll explain clear to you, Sir!"

"Peter," interrupted the ex-Quaker, "keep to the point; there is no spare time for gossip."

"Misther Mac Nevitt," replied the little tailor, "a talker o' gossip isn't the name I go by. But you spake sense, in the other part o' your sayin'. An' so, Sir, I'll only tell you, as a piece o' news worth knowin', that Curnel Barry 'ud ate a Catholic of a Good Friday, and ax no sauce to his mate."

"But, Mr. Rooney," said the stranger, "you were about to supply some account of the progress of the Union between Bunclody, Newtown-Barry, and Old Ross, if I remember."

"If Pether would give us as good measure back again in the coats an' breeches, (when he gets good measure, an' that's always,) as he does of his speech, he'd be an honest tailor," remarked one of the deliberators.

"I'll uphold Pether Rooney to be a thradesman with a conscience," said another. "I say he's too honest. He sent me home a coat that would cover three like me."

"I'll engage he had a yard to spare, for all that," remarked a third.

There were some signs of perturbation about Peter, as these comments occurred, particularly manifested by his seizing both "lugs" of his wig, and giving it a forcible drag forward. But Mr. Mac Nevitt, besides that this southern habit of mixing up humour with business did not suit his notions of propriety, wished to appease the little man's wrath.

"My good friends," he said, "I think, with all respect to you, that you are inclined to be facetious out of time. What is more, you interrupt the official report of Mr. Peter Rooney, whom I have always found intelligent, and able to convey, clearly, any explanation he proposes to give."

"Misther Mac Nevitt," answered Peter, "I'm behoulden to you for your good opinion." He smoothed down, with both hands, the sleek crown of his wig, which, in contradistinction to dragging it by the "lugs," denoted placidity and satisfaction. "These gentlemen are only a little funny. Bud I seen people, many times in my life, that were the born images o' geese, in more ways than one. There's some that's like the goose I have at home, myself, flat an' heavy, with no life nor hait, barren' it's put into 'em by one that

has the sense they want. An' show me the man 'ud do that, for a goose o' the kind, as well as Pether Rooney? Then there's others o' them like grey geese you'd see swimmin', because they gabble just the same way, an' always as loud, whether they're atin' or drinkin', merry or sad, doin' nothin', or havin' somethin' to do."

This studied retort was characteristic of Peter; containing something to the purpose, but disguised in a roundabout mode of speech.

"And now, gentlemen all, resumed Mr. Mac Nevitt, "since you stand on equal terms of word for word, let us attend to business."

"Did you run over wid your eye, Sir," asked Peter of the stranger, "along the map in your hand, the ground from Bunclody to Ould Ross?"

"I have, indeed, done so."

"A brisk thraveller you are, Sir. 'Twould be a great matther if a body could keep up with you on a journey. Well, Sir, it's good fifteen Irish miles from Bunclody to Ould Ross: from the side o' the Slaney, acrass to the foot o' Mount Leinsther, by the very spot where the Upper-baronial is now sittin', is two, or thereaway; in the middle, from Enniscorthy to the Black Stairs, is again nigh-hand to noin an' a half: an' at the bottom, from the river, by Ould Ross lackin hill, New Ross is about twelve an' a half again. I'm tellin' this to show I know every yard o' the ground well; an' no thanks to me for the same. I tuck my kit, an' I went thravellin' for work, Sir, once that road. Not that I wanted more than I'd find every day in the year, on the shopboard at home,—from the best o' customers, too:—but what's a man at all, if he doesn't give up gains for his counthry? And so, Sir, I called at one house an' another, up an' down, an' was welcome in all places, because I'm no sich workman as them that's nothin' but needle-carriers. A man gets a name in his callin' when he earns money by it!

"Well! While I was on my thravels, I done my endayvour. I swore in as many as I could get to understand the nath'r o' the thing. An' that's a good number. And I larn sence, they're swearin' in others; an' them others more again; an' so on. But it isn't so asy to break the crath'rs o' the way they have o' goin' out in the night, an' doin' harm without doin' good: they wouldn't listen to us, nor care about us at all, only for fear o' what's to come on 'em."

"Is the system of the Union observed at the initiation of your friends, Mr. Rooney?"

"Not meoch, Sir, I'm sorry to say. They're too well watched for it, an', morebetoken, 'ud as lieve folly the fashion they're used

to in their Defendher line. I'll tell you the way it's brought about among 'em. Myself, supposin', comes acrass a friend, as we think, an' we begin by talkin' over the times, an' the slaughther of all Catholics that's surely to be; an' may be, I ax him, or he axes me, didn't he or didn't I hear o' the plan for havin' the people ready to stand out against the murdhering Orangemen? Maybe he'll say 'Yes,' maybe 'No.' Then I'll make it plain—a matther asily done: there's nothin' else for id; an' furthermore, I'll show him the way we'll scourge them bloody dogs out of our land, at the same time that we hender them from killin' us. He b'lieves every word I say,—no praise to him for the same;—an' I whips out my book, an' makes a man of him, an' gives him the sign. An' he talks to a friend about it, an' makes a man of him too. An' they go and get pikes made, an' hide 'em till the time comes."

"Peter Rooney has given a very good account of the state of the counthry in these parts," remarked one of the farmers, who had not before addressed the meeting.

"I'll go bail I have," said Peter, smoothing his wig.

"And his words," resumed the speaker, "will hold good for nearly the whole of the county. This half year back, I was goin' about, from one fair to another, almost thro' the whole of the County Wexford, an' I made it part o' my business to ask afther the progress the cause had lately made in different baronies, and hamlets, and villages. An', as Peter says, that I learned."

"There's a little more to be said," observed another farmer, "when a knowledgable person is in a public-house, he minds, by the talk that's going on, what folks are round him, an' he lays down the plan o' the Committee in Dublin, and the strangers and himself will be sworn brothers before they part."

"No regular meetings, I perceive?" inquired the agent.

"I don' know of a single one, the same that was pointed out to us when I was sworn in Stephen's-green, in all the County Wexford. Except in the town of Wexford itself, maybe,—where there's district committees and parochial committees. But this you may depend on, Sir, the people are ready enough, and no wondher they should."

"Well, gentlemen! more method and system would be requisite to produce the organization necessary for full success. Yet, as you are so closely observed, and as matters now hasten to a crisis, I can only advise that, by all means available, you go on swearing in as many as you can. Let us, at least, have the physical power of the country in a state of preparation. One part of the statements

made I wish to observe upon. It is a mistake that every Protestant is an Orangeman, or an enemy to Roman Catholics. On the contrary, the originators of our confederacy were to a man Protestants: its present heads are chiefly Protestants: its principal agents, too. For instance, I am a Protestant, myself. And, indeed, what means our title 'United Irishmen,' if it does not describe a combination of every sect for our country's good? You are almost exclusively Catholics here in the South, merely, because you form the bulk of the population."

"A word or two from me," said the person who had begun the attack on Peter Rooney; "There's no use in thrying to persuade ourselves, or the poor people round us, that the Protestants of Wexford are our friends. Aren't all the Orangemen Protestants? And haven't all the Protestants, here, firelocks in their hands, swearing our downfall? Let me whisper this, too, in your ear, Sir. The Wexford boys would never turn out against ould King George, if they didn't see that ould King George was going to let them be slauthered with them same Orange firelocks."

"That's gospel truth," remarked another. "The people o' this county are industhrous, and would rather mind their work, if they thought they'd be let to mind it."

"An' there's one thing," said Peter Rooney. "When it comes to pass that the Waxford boys onct stands up for Ireland an' Liberty; they that will conquer over 'em won't have childer's play."

"Right, Pether," he answered. And a stouter cock of your inches, doesn't sthrut upon Wexford ground this moment!"

"But we have a dhry meeting of it," observed another; "we must do good to Shawn-a-Gow's house, as well as to the counthry."

He rang a hand-bell. Kitty tripped in, and as she passed the ex-Quaker, whispered, "Why, then, you done well, Sir, to take off the patch. It was a pity to have such a shiner undher a cloud."

Ere he could answer she had tripped out again, to attend to her orders; but when she came back with the liquor, he whispered, in turn, "Sly Kitty! you must have the ribbon and the Barcelony without farther payment than keeping a secret."

"I'll do that," she answered, "without ribbon or Barcelony handkerchief.

"I believe you. But, tell me, has that impudent fellow left the kitchen?"

"Just rise your new eye, an' the ould one along with it, that's as good as the new—without risin' your head, Sir,—to the window."

He did as Kitty directed him, and the face of Rattling Bill appeared for an instant at the glass.

"How got he there, Kitty?"

"Through the cabbage-garden." She withdrew.

"Does any one know," resumed Mr. Mac Nevitt aloud, "a juggling fellow whom I met abroad in the kitchen?"

"You mane Rattlin' Bill Nale, Sir," answered Peter Rooney. "A useful boy he is: swearin' in more o' the Waxford army o' freedom than any ten of us."

"I feared he had the aspect of a spy when he gave me the sign; but since he is thus answered for, I can fear nothing. Yet, Peter, my friend, be on your guard. There are many mean and base adventurers going about in the same way, only to fill their pouches with blood-money."

Peter again answered for his colleague. And now leaving this, as the little tailor called it, "Upper-baronial," to complete its sitting, how and when it chooses, we propose, after a single glance into the kitchen, to follow Bill Nale through others of his movements.

Tim Reily, in consequence of his master's instructions to wait upon the stranger, returning to Shawn-a-Gow's, after he had seen Sir Thomas safe home, checked his bounding step outside the kitchen-door, and stole safely through it.

"She does'nt see the laste taste o' me," he soliloquized, advancing still cautiously to the spot where, having just turned her back to the door, Kitty stood by her mother's side, busily employed in doing something that it would have been no great waste of time if she had left undone. Indeed, to let the reader into a secret, (which we do, as some recompense for his patience regarding other secrets not yet revealable) Tim Reily was Kitty's most approved sweetheart. He was a man after her own mind; gay, good-humoured, good natured, and frolicsome. And some personal affinity also existed between them; for if Kitty was a pretty girl, Tim was a "clane, clever boy," in the estimation, at least, of her hazel eyes.

"No," continued Tim, as he stole nearer, "she doesn't know a bit, I'm comin' close on her—not she!" and whether he was right or wrong in ironically attributing this piece of coquetry, Kitty, when he laid his hand on her shoulder, gave a lively little start. But she did not scream, for good reasons; there were others to hear, besides Tim.

"Kitty, my *cuishla*, is it frightened at me you are?"

"Yes—an' no wonder for me!"

"But is your heart batin' a-chorra?"

"Be quiet—you won't find out, this time."

"Well, there's no use in talkin'. I'll b'lieve in dhrames the longest day I live,—if I dhrame any thing the night afore."

"An' maybe you'd tell us why?"

"Becase my last dhreme is out, the present time. I dhreamt, ast night, Kitty, you were wantin' to kiss me, an' I wouldn't let you."

"An' that was a very impident dhrame for you, I'd have you to know."

"Did you never hear, cuishla ma-chree, that dhrames went by conthraries?"

"No:—an' I don't want to hear it now."

"Why, then, that's the way you ought to read 'em, Kitty, b'lieve me. Becase, if 'twas a thing you dhramed, *I* was kissin' *you*—"

"I'll never dhrame the like."

"But, in case it so happened, an' more unlikely dhrames comes to pass in a body's sleep,—many's a time,—the thruth 'ad be, that 'tis *you* 'ud be kissin' *me*."

"Go along out o' that, wid your talk."

"But, as it turns up that I had a dhrame that *you* were kissin' *me*, why, to go by conthraries, its *I* must kiss *you*!" The last words were an interrupted mumble, so quickly did the act illustrate their theory. "There now, ma colleen. An' sure it's no great matther, afther all, which o' the two had the dhrame, for it turns out much the same in the long run."

This is given as a specimen of the manner in which Tim Reily carried on his courtship. But, as we have more serious business in hand, no farther space must be occupied by illustrations of the mode of "coortin' in the counthry," as we remember to have heard it defined. We take a final leave of Shawn-a-Gow's kitchen, for the purpose of visiting Shawn-a-Gow's forge. Only remarking, at our exit, that Tim Reily made good use of the time he was obliged to spend in waiting to escort the stranger. And that,—with the Knitter retired to a neutral distance, and Davy Moore exhibiting not the least sign of jealousy, while, wholly occupied with the fate to which his desirable person seemed exposed, he sat opposite to the couple,—Tim's arm was, during the course of the night, seen encompassing Kitty's waist, while he hummed into her complimented ears the last effusion of his muse.

"As I rambled a walkin' one mornin' in May,
I spied a fair maiden a-passin' that way;
The sun he was shinin' so bright an' so clear,
And the birds they were singin', most pleasant to hear;

But the sight to *my* eyes more pleasant, *a-hany*,*
Was Kitty Delouchery, the pride of the Slaney!

There was flowers an' posies a-growin' all round,
There was daisies and cowslips that cover'd the ground,
There was daffydowndillies so handsome to see,
An' sweet smellin' primroses undher the three;
But my *cuishla* came by, an' none blossom'd so gaily,
As Kitty Delouchery, the pride o' the Slaney!

Come all ye fair craturs, an' stand by her side,
Come all ye bould boys that in coortin' take pride,
An' ye must make answer, there's not one ye see,
So comely to look at in any degree,
From Ballytoige Bay to the woods o' Shillely,
As Kitty Delouchery, the pride o' the Slaney!"

CHAPTER XXII.

BILL NALE, after inspecting, through the window, the company in the lower room, and subsequently deciding, by his observations in the kitchen, that sufficient punch had been sent into them to insure a late sitting, issued forth, and knocked cautiously at the horse-shoe-stamped door of Shawn-a-Gow's smithy. Signals passed between him and those within, and he was soon admitted.

The forge flared up on high, sending sparks to the wattled roof, and roaring in concert with the blast of the large bellows, to heat to its proper temperament the bar of iron about to be manufactured, by Shawn's massive hand, into the rude weapons that afterwards wrought such slaughter.

The red flame fiercely lit up, till they almost seemed ignited, half of the figures of a number of men, whose persons intercepted its farther illumination of the rough apartment. It died away as the iron was withdrawn to the anvil, and those figures faded into mysterious uncertainty: when the glowing metal cooled and blackened, all became dense gloom, except a space immediately around the seemingly-expiring fire. Again it flared up, and again seemed to call the figures into a supernatural visibility; half-defining, at the same time, the wattles overhead, the bench with the vice, at one side,

* Term of endearment.

and other prominent objects. And during this second fitful glare, the forms of three or four additional men were imperfectly suggested to the mind, amid the vague shadow that wrapped the extreme end of the workshop. Altogether, the place was strongly characteristic of the fiery passions of the times, and of the accompanying mystery in which they were sought to be expressed and indulged.

"Hah!—you're at the work, Shawn!" said Bill Nale, when the door closed behind him.

"That's plain to be seen, without witchcraft," answered the smith as he withdrew the iron from the fire. Then he pounded away, making sparks fly about at every vigorous stroke of his hammer.

Bill took up a pike-head that lay on the forge-hob. It was near a foot in length, and more than two inches in breadth; having a sharp crook low down at one side, and a little hatchet, or cleaver, at the other; the former adjunct intended to be used—as it subsequently was used—in cutting, during close action, the bridles of the cavalry horses. This was the most perfect pike manufactured: it will be admitted, that when affixed to a handle sometimes measuring fourteen feet, and wielded by a strong arm prompted by an enraged heart, it must have been a formidable weapon. In general, however, the pike-head consisted of a blade, the length and breadth of that mentioned, carelessly pointed, and roughly bevelled towards the edges.

"That's the right sort," remarked Bill to one of the men who surrounded the fire; "through and through, by—" measuring it across his body.

"From the heart to the back-bone," replied the man; "or, if the Sasenach was mannerly, from the back to the breast wid it."

"As I'll sarve a thousand of 'em, afore long, on the green sod that they think to redden wid our own blood," resumed Bill.

"Never fear, boy,—we'll take our own parts," was the reply. At this moment the forge blazed up, to show to each of the speakers the grim smile that accompanied the words of the other.

"Tell me," continued Bill, "did the boys you spoke about, come to-night?"

"They're here to the fore."

"We'll just stop a-bit, till Jack Delouchery has the tickler pounded out, an' then make thrue men o' them."

Rattling Bill was far from carrying himself, before the domineering Gow, with the bullying air that was his usual habit. On the present occasion he evinced a serious ardency, calculated to re-

commend him to Shawn's consideration, and generally to inspire the feelings he wished to create.

Jack Delouchery soon flung the new-finished weapon among a heap of others that had been fashioned during the evening. He was again about to thrust his iron into the fire, when Bill specially addressed him.

"Hould your hand, Shawn, till the boys kiss the primer."

"Make quick work then," growled Shawn. "The night's wearin', an' the things we're forgin' don't want to have the daylight shinin' on 'em:" and tucking his huge fists under his arms, he seated himself on his anvil, as on a throne.

The blast of the great bellows ceased. The column of shooting flame sank down, and there was deep silence, and almost pitch darkness. Except, as before noticed, a circular glow around the spot where the seemingly decayed furnace awaited, like the spirit of the times, but another puff to set it flaming on high again.

"Where's the boys that's to take the oath?" questioned Bill of the person he had first addressed; who, in a sonorous under-tone, calculated to be heard in the remote corners of the forge, but not a step beyond its walls, called out the names of four men. They answered in the same key, and moved from the utter gloom, to the glimmering spot where stood the master of the ceremonies.

"An', by the hokey-farmer," continued Bill, qualifying his blasphemy, "ye're goin' to do the only thing that 'ill save ye an' yours from ruin an' slaughter."

"God's truth you tell 'em, mon," said a person among the crowd, speaking in the northern accent.

"Isn't that Charley M'Guire I hear?" asked Bill.

"He, and no uther," he was answered.

"What way did the Protestants sarve you in the North, Charley?"

"It's a bad story, troth," said the man. "But I'ill e'en give it ti ye, to show ye what ye're to reckon on from the Protestants o' the Sooth. For, Sooth or North, an Orangeman is the same. I am but one of thousands of souls, hunted out of hoose an' home, and sent roaming over the country, without shed to shelter us or bit or sup for our lips. Hundreds of our religion, who didn't flee, were killed. And when I flitted, my gude woman, getting up from her lying-in bed, thought to flit wi' me. But she died in the next field—troth, died, and her baby by her side, too. And there's my story, lads!"

Smothered ejucalations of grief, rage, and abhorrence burst from all, as Shawn sprang to his feet from his anvil.

"And, hear till me, lads," continued the man, in the same subdued tone he had before used, and which distinctly gave the idea that he was rehearsing a grief, long laid up to his heart, and cherished in his mind. "Hear till me, lads—May my soul never see Heaven's light, but I'll have life for my gude-woman's life, and life for her child's life!"

"D'ye mind, Jack Delouchery?" questioned Bill. "And now tell me, why is King George makin' sodgers of all the Protestants in Wexford, an' givin' 'em firelocks an' bagnets?"

"I can give answer to that," said a voice, while the taciturn Gow spoke no word. "I hard a dozen o' Capt'n Whaley's Yeomen in Enniscorthy callin' us all gallows Papishes, an' swearin' oath upon oath that they'd cut us down like thistles."

"Oath!" repeated Bill; "talkin' of their oaths, dhraw near me, boys, an' cock your ears an' listen. Here's the very oath they take, an' ye hard tell of it often. I cum round one of 'em, an' he gave it to me. Blow up the fire a-bit, *ma-bouchal*, till I read it out for ye. Aye, by ——! an' there's no light so good to read it in as the light o' the fire that reddens the iron, that makes the pike, that 'ill be waitin' snug for 'em."

The light was accordingly roused, so as to give a quiet, steady blaze; and Bill read as follows from a sheet of soiled paper:—

"I do solemnly swear, that I will be thrue to the King and Government"—(Dnoul thank 'em)—"and that I will exterminate"—(that manes, boys, no more or less than to slaughther an' kill, an' lave no sowl behind)—"that I will exterminate, as far as I am able"—(Bill might have here put a critical parenthesis, but, with all his cleverness, he missed the blunder)—"the Catholics of Ireland, and that I will wade ankle deep in Papist blood."

The Gow, instinctively catching up his sledge, struck a ringing blow upon his anvil. It acted like the sudden clang of an alarm bell. The group that had been bending forward with breathless attention to the reader, started into sudden and stern expression. Eye glared upon eye; each glance, as well as each rigid feature, fitly flashing in the flicker of the furnace blaze. Then might be heard broken utterings of their terror and their resolves for vengeance,—subdued, however, in loudness, by the necessity all felt to keep down even the accent of their passions and their purpose.

"We must take care of ourselves, then," followed up Shawn-a-Gow. As if nothing more than his decision had been wanted, the whole group repeated his few words.

"Give our own oath to *me*, Bill Nale," said one of the men, who that night had travelled many a hill-side mile to be initiated.

"An' *that* I will, as I done by others afore you," replied the grand conspirator.

"Well; I'll blast up the fire for ye, once again," zealously said the agent of the bellows.

"No want of it, now. I have the oath as pat as my prayers: betther, maybe, if the priest was to thry me in the both." He drew a book from his bosom, and handed it to the new candidate. "Now, keep the silent tongue, every mother's sowl o' ye. Do you, Pat Mooney, say the words afther me; an' I'll say 'em asy for you, the way a child might folly the lader."

The man stood singly out from the others; while Bill Nale, in the mysterious tones that all had used during the evening, repeated the form of the United Irish oath. Word for word, it was the same oath, now and then administered, by which Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Thomas Addis Emmett, Theobald Wolfe Tone, and the rest of the Protestant organizers of revolution, had originally bound themselves together. It ran thus: "In the awful presence of God, I do voluntarily declare, that I will persevere in endeavouring to form *a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen of every religious persuasion;* and that I will also persevere in my endeavours to obtain an equal, full, and adequate representation of all the people of Ireland.

"I do further declare, that neither hopes, fears, rewards, nor punishments, shall ever induce me, directly or indirectly, to inform against any members of this or similar societies, *for any act*, or expression of theirs, done or made, collectively or individually, in or out of the society, *in pursuance of the spirit of the obligation.*"

"Kiss the book, my boy, an' your oath is taken; an' mind it, an' be a thrue man."

It is worthy of remark, that the only part of this celebrated oath which intimated, without conveying its real import, is comprised in the last words we have marked in italics. By referring to the words we have first so marked, the reader will perceive how different from the extended views of its philosophical framers, is the spirit in which it is taken by its present new adherents.

In this place, too, we may be permitted to add, that we do not by any means credit the authenticity of Bill Nale's version of the oath of the opposite fraternity. It does not appear possible that such a pledge of fellowship could be entered into by any body of human beings. Anger, out of the lips of a rancorous sectarian, might unthinkingly speak the threat our juggler has seemed to quote:—de-

liberation, even amongst sectarian rancour, never, we hope and believe, could utter them.

That such, however, was the bond of adherence amongst Orangemen, the peasantry of the South of Ireland fully believed. The sanguinary persecution of their brethren in the North, and the undisputedly authentic manifestos of "To Hell or Connaught!" often promulgated by their Ulster enemies, necessarily caused such belief to be easy of acceptance. In the plan subsequently avowed by the minister, to produce, by goading the people, partial explosions of the rebellion throughout Ireland, the Protestant yeomanry of Wexford were, so far as Wexford was concerned, chiefly instrumental. The terrified population thus became confirmed in their notion, that, according to the oath rehearsed by Bill Nale, they were to be exterminated.

"Throw me your fist, my boy," the initiator continued to the man who had just been sworn.—"The sign, now:" he taught it to him. "That will do; an' to make all sure, whenever you get it from a brother—'Are you up?' you'll say to him; an' he'll make answer, 'I am up.' Then you'll ax him again—'Are you sthraight?' and he 'ill say, 'I am.' 'How sthraight are you?' you 'ill question; 'As sthraight as a rush,' 'ill be his word. Then you 'ill know him to be a thrue an' loyal brother; an' if he questions you, answer in the same sort: for them is the words of a thrue man."

The same ceremony was gone through with the three other candidates; and when the inauguration ended,—

"Now blast up your fire to the roof o' the forge," continued the bustling lawgiver, "till Shawn-a-Gow makes the tools for these honest boys, that 'll work their way in spite o' guns an' bagnets."

The command was obeyed. Once more the furnace sent up its roaring column of flame, revealing the effects of Bill's grim humour upon the features of the group. Shawn-a-Gow, after a moment of brooding thought, his huge hands still hugged under his arms, suddenly arose from his anvil and proceeded, with freshened alertness and vigour, to concluded his practical part in the business of the night.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Months again elapse before our Tale moves forward. It is April: the budding graces of youthful Nature are abroad on every shrub and tree. That bosom which glows not cheerily under such influence must be made of unkindly stuff, or its primitive sensibilities must have been destroyed by passion, by care, or by rough contact with the world.

It is April, too, as deep in cogitation, we are employed in compiling our story. When we unconsciously raise our eye and look forth over the glimpse of spring, framed, like a picture, by the limits of our study-window, the furrow above our brow of thought relaxes, the wrinkle of combination around our mouth curves into a smile; and the current of life joyously tingles through our sobered veins.

The cloud that has just shed the gently falling shower, too heavy to be moved by the soft breeze, yet hangs on high;—a sombre canopy, of which the curtained edges, catching the slant sunbeam, become chequered and fringed beyond the imitation of art, with glowing vermilion, or with burnished gold. To the west is a mellow, clear speck of sky, whence, in a flood of dazzling light, flows the radiance of the setting luminary. Partly intercepted by intervening trees, garden-turrets, and gothic ruins; he flings his golden smiles but upon portions of objects, while their less favoured parts soften into the cool grey tint of evening. Among the budding trees and garden bushes, he glances at random in laughing brilliancy; changing into a bright yellow the yet unexpanded leaf, into rich amber, the milky blossom: transforming into diamond sparks each raindrop that pends from bud and branch and blade; clothing in radiance yon ivy-covered castle, and spreading in a milder stream of glory over the distant heights.

The breeze scarce flutters the infant leaves, and, as if to fondle with their young and innocent beauty, tenderly breathes upon the blossoms. Yonder majestic pear-tree, planted by the Monks of former days, that has opened its flowery bosom to the showers and the sun of more than a hundred springs, now thickly bears upon its aged branches the blossoming youth of yet another April, supplies on its topmost bough a perch to a happy thrush. Stretching his speckled neck, he pours out his strain of joy and melody, fully appreciated by his listening mate, who, nested in the budding hedge beneath, screens her callow brood under the yellow lining of her wings.

The robin, standing on a humbler height, distends his red throat, and, in answer to the challenge of a distant rival, vigorously chants his soft and plaintive stanza: alternately they listen to each other's music, and sing note for note, in a little strife of harmony. The industrious rooks, modifying into some cadence of affection their harsh croak, forget their gregarious habits, and wing home in pairs. The sparrow's flippant chirp has lost its sauciness, and is changed into an insinuating twitter as he frolicks round his yet coy mistress; or, more serious grown, comes to take her place in the nest, that, ere the cheery sun has quite sunk, she may have her share of enjoyment. And other birds, of various plumage, vault into the air, flap their wings in the sunbeam, and perch, and vault again, contributing their different songs of exultation. All is fair and fresh, pleasant and good to look upon, to listen to, and to inhale. Nature's youthful beauty, varied at every glance, fills the eye. The breeze, the air is fragrance, and the ear rings with blended sounds of rejoicing.

But from the fascinations of Nature we must unwillingly withdraw our regards. For, in as fair a land as Spring ever strewed with flowers, those for whom the earth is adorned and made prolific, are preparing for deeds doomed to soil her beauty with blood, and to turn her abundance into desolation:—a land blessed by God, and accursed in the acts of men!

The "Upper-baronial," as it has been technically termed by little Peter Rooney, but which was in very few respects similar to the more regular assemblies so denominated, will show that, upon the eve of the insurrection planned by the Northern and Dublin leaders, the county of Wexford remained almost unorganized. The initiation in the forge illustrates the same fact. Government, aware of the peaceable dispositions, in the first instance, of this portion of the kingdom, left it nearly unprotected. When, subsequently, agents of "The Union" began to arouse, by appeals to their instinct of self-preservation, the disaffection of the Wexfordians, still, from necessity or choice, the chief armed force left to deal, according to a plan already glanced at, with the people, was the Protestant yeomanry of the county; such as in a former chapter we have seen under review. After Government, at its own leisure, had caused to be arrested in Dublin, many of the principal heads of the conspiracy—(a measure it *could* have taken long before;)—and after the civil law of the land had, on the 30th of March, become suspended all over Ireland, and military domination decreed in its

stead, these men well evinced their fitness for precipitating into partial outbreaks, the population entrusted to their care.

A majority of the public for whom we write, have been long familiar with liberty and independence,—long delivered from despotism—and, during at least the lapse of two centuries, have not experienced on their privileged persons a touch of Despotism's most darling mode of coercion—bodily torture. The lowliest subject of England would flout the notion that, for any breach of law or statute, his flesh was to quiver beneath the torturer's gripe. So safe, immediately at home, he most probably supposes, in favour of his fellow-subject of Ireland, similar exemption from similar cruelty and infamy. It is therefore with some doubts of even the capability of the minds of Englishmen to receive our facts, that we proceed to mention in what manner the trampled down men of our country were, in many instances, driven into the toils which were coolly set for them by mongrel legislators, neither Irish nor English.

The arrest, in Dublin, before a single insurgent took the field, of the influential leaders, may be said to have broken and paralyzed, tardily as was the measure adopted, the plan and progress of the conspiracy: it cannot be doubted that, if wise measures of conciliation had been then adopted towards the people, the rebellion of 1798 would never have occurred. But this consummation does not seem to have been wished for. So soon as martial law was proclaimed throughout the country, the military, such as they were, proceeded, upon private information, or upon mere suspicion, to acts that made open insurrection in different places, and particularly in the scene of our Tale, almost necessary. Houses and cabins, in which the objects of their vengeance could not be found, were burnt to ashes. When the suspected person was apprehended, not only did he writhe under the scourge, until he fainted or died; but, in the view of compelling him to confess against others, he was either half-strangled, and called back from the verge of eternity to be again catechised, or—hearken, free and proud Englishmen!—the hair of his head was cut off, a cap smeared with pitch was applied, and, when it had closely adhered, was violently dragged away, almost scalping the sufferer.

But we anticipate. The sequel of our story rests upon an occurrence and a scene which, so far as it is possible to submit details to the reader, will illustrate these general statements.

In the midst of such public terror and confusion, did Sir Willaim Judkin plead for the hand of Eliza Hartley. Sir Thomas could not account to himself for his tardiness in granting the lover's

suit; and he strove to be convinced that he entertained no repugnance to the suitor. But ultimately the marriage-day was fixed,—a day upon which Eliza Hartley would complete her nineteenth year; the exact age at which her mother had become a wife.

The interval, until her proposed change of condition, was contemplated by our heroine with much anxiety. She heard discussed, by every one around her, convulsions that might disorganize the whole frame of society, and expose her, and all dear to her, to frightful perils. And her apprehensions of another danger, though it was of a private kind, especially weighed down her spirits.

After Sir William Judkin's account of his amicable meeting with the juggler, Eliza's dread of that person, as an agent of Harry Talbot, almost passed away. Nanny's anecdote of the conversation she had heard outside the hedge, became shorn of its terrors. But the industrious gossip afterwards demanded an audience, for the purpose of detailing new information on the subject, and our heroine's doubts and fears were called up afresh. The adventure which Nanny tramped to Hartley Court to communicate, we shall rehearse rather as it happened, than as the fair auditor was compelled to receive it.

Using an increased degree of caution in her proceedings, proportioned to her increased abhorrence and fears of the wizard who could cut off and put on, at his leisure, the head of Shawn-a-Gow's bracket-hen, Nanny still kept her eye on Rattling Bill Nale. Into the boudoir of Nelly Hannigan, the housekeeper of Mr. Talbot, she sometimes contrived to insinuate herself. Under the pretence of professions of pity "for the poor young masther bein' crassed," as she termed his disappointment in love, Mrs. Hannigan was glad to receive, for an evening's gossip, her old acquaintance. Nanny always took care to steal into the house, without exposing her person to the observations of its proprietor.

During such visits, our Knitter learned that some surprise existed amongst the household at the intimate footing upon which the Blackguard and the Squire seemed to be together. She learned, too, that their conferences were frequently held in a grove, near the house, and at a particular spot in that grove. Warily, but promptly, did she take her measures. The ground was first reconnoitred. At daybreak, upon a following morning, when she learned that Nale had, the previous night, been an inmate of the house, Nanny, about the time they might be expected to issue forth, assumed her position under a great lime-tree, which, as if designed to screen eavesdroppers, threw out, from a trunk of not more than three feet

in height, branches of noble growth, that, sweeping to the ground, formed a most artful hiding-place for the inquisitive old dame.

Under this tree, we remember to have taken shelter from a torrent of rain; and while listening to the assault of waters above and around us, our person remained perfectly dry, until the sun, without penetrating our shade, again shone forth, and invited us to continue our ramble. And beneath the same canopy, agitated by contending hopes and fears, and broiling with curiosity, did our friend Nanny conceal herself. The leaves had not yet gained their full expansion, so that she could command an imperfect view of any persons passing without; and she calculated that the shadow in which she settled, aided by the crippled position which she assumed, and by her perfect stillness, would prevent passengers from having the same advantage over her. In truth, she first heaped her cloak, close to the trunk, to about the same height and space she proposed to fill, placing her foxy hat upon it, and, then going out, peered through the branches, and found the effigy undistinguishable even to her conscious eye.

After more than an hour of patient expectation, Nanny crouched close, at the sound of approaching voices and footsteps. Rattling Bill, accompanied by Harry Talbot, in his uniform of a Yeoman captain, came up.

"And the day is fixed," said Harry Talbot, in a tone of deep sorrow.

"Sure enough," replied his companion.

"How did you gain your intelligence?"

"Do you know an ould *slinkeen** of a jade, Capt'n, that goes peepin' an' gostherin' through the parish? They call her Nanny the Knitter."

Nanny felt uncomfortable in her concealment.

"Yes," replied Talbot; "an ungrateful old Jezabel she is."

"An ould colloch," continued Nale, "that 'ud sell her own sowl an' body for a copper groat. But she'd betther 'ware me, or I'll put her from peepin' on my road. Well! I hard this same ould Tory, when she didn't think I was within ear-shot, tellin' the news to Misthress Delouchery, beyant. To-day month they think they'll be married. Hah! hah! what a guess they have! There's diversion in spilin' their sport, if there was nothin' else in it."

"Why delay to act, till the last moment?"

"We must go our own way to work, Capt'n, that's all. There's

* A mean idler.

but one in the world Bill Nale is afeard of, an' he goes by ordhers o' that one."

"Then, of myself, I will act openly. If, by any delay of our's, this marriage takes place, I am a wretch for ever."

"There's more of it, again. You can't do without me, Capt'n. Who's to bear you out? Tell me that, my bould commandher."

"You speak truly."

"Then," the fellow said insolently,—"a word out o' your jaw, an' I lave you to fight your own battle. There's no one to know what happens to that frolicksome blade, barrin' my own self an' them I can depend on. So let us work the way we like."

They passed on, and their words became indistinct in distance; while Nanny literally shivered and chattered with apprehension.

Out she would have crept, did she not sorely fear observation and detection, in the very act for which she had just been threatened with chastisement. In this dilemma, she pulled up her beads from the depths of her pocket, and, stipulating for a merciful release from present danger, hurried over her propitiatory orisons. But, doubtless, the part of the dialogue she had lost, was as important as that which she had heard. After an interval of piety and self-assurance, Nanny burned with almost her former curiosity.

As if to give her an equivalent for the continuous information she could not, however, hope to attain, Fortune re-directed to her sanctuary, after they had walked the length of the grove, the footsteps of Talbot and his associate. Without farther change of place, they now ended the conversation.

"If your attempt should fail?" questioned the former.

"Fail? that's what often happens wid me, isn't it? But, supposin' it did turn up so, there's another, an' as good a way, by the livin' farmer—hark'ye, Capt'n:" he rustled against Nanny's screen, and his voice sank to a hollow growl: "I have the ould Father, himself, in the net, whenever it's plasin' to me to dhraw the line."

"What do you mean?" questioned Talbot, starting at the words he heard.

"That's a sacret for my own sef, Capt'n; but, this mooch I'll whisper to you. Sir Thomas 'ill swing as high as two sticks can hould him, afore his daughter is married against your wish an' likin'."

"I cannot understand you—you must explain your meaning."

"Must is for the king, Capt'n, though it 'll soon go hard wid him to *have* his must, I can tell him. There'll be hot work a-doin', an' I'll be in thick o' the play, runnin' wid the hare, an'

houldin' wid the hound; an' I'ill do my own business, in every kind, in the height o' the hurry. *If* I don't, call me what the people wouldn't b'lieve o' me, a fool widout brains. But I must be thrapsin', Capt'n, an' I want a shiner."

"You must inform me more particularly of your measures. Else, how can you expect my co-operation?"

"That's as much as if I was to say, help, a-hand?"

"Such is my meaning."

"Then keep your help, supposin' you don't like to give it, Captain. I can steer my own coorse; and who's the loser by our stayin' asundher? When we're bettber friends, maybe I'd let you into my crans. And the best thing in the world for openin', or shettin' a mouth, is a goolden kay, or a goolden padlock."

"I've forgotten my purse. Come with me to the house. But, no—I expect a person who must not see you. Await me here."

"That same I'll do. It's beginnin' to rain a dhrop, so you'll find me undher this three, Capt'n." And as Talbot departed, Rattling Bill, to the direful consternation of Nanny, rudely broke through her frail screen. She was in that state of intense terror, during which mind and body seem to become one mingled and confounded mass of shrinking confusion, when he stumbled against her squatted person.

"In the name o' the Dnoul, who have we here?" he asked, in a muttering, boding tone. She did not answer, but, while her lips unconsciously puckered up into a spasmodic and pitiable expression, as if she were about to burst into crying, and while they mumbled, inaudibly, the prayers her mind did not comprehend, poor Nanny's eye, with the stupified glare of the hare's when surprised in her form, fixed on that of the intruder.

"In the name of the Dnoul!" he repeated, raising his terrible voice.

"It's a poor ould lump of a sinner, my honey pet," at length whispered Nanny, "that's just cum out o' the sun to be sayin' her prayers!"

"By the sowl o' my Mother!" imprecated Bill, (all the dreadful properties of the old northern witch coming across Nanny's mind,) he could not have imprecated more astoundingly—"by the sowl o' my Mother! an' *that's* the best work you could be at, the present time. For it's runnin' in my mind you'll want a good bag o' prayers on the road you're to thravel, afore we part."

"Och! purtect us!" screamed Nanny; "are you goin' to hurt sich a poor crature of a sinner?"

"Listen—or I'll make it a sore day to you! I know you're on the peep afther me, an' I know you well enough to see you're as cute as an ould fox."

"Och! that I mayt'nt commit a sin—an' bad manners to me"—Nanny began to asseverate—

"Whisht, I bid you! No matther to you how I come to know your schames—not a word out o' your head, but now, up on your ould legs, an' mind me, well. Only your face makes me pity you, I'd kill you on the spot where you stand! But, let me hear you open your mouth to spake one word in anything you ever hard me say—or let me ketch you come peepin' on my path again, an' the death you'll get is sich as no ould cat in the counthry ever died. Do you mind, I say?"

"I'll mind it the longest day I have breath in my poor ould body. May I never sin, but I will!"

As Nanny replied, there was in her manner a conviction of the necessity of the resolution, which satisfied Bill Nale that it would be adhered to. He saw that he had properly taken her in hand.

"Yes;—I b'lieve you won't desave me, for your own sake—an' becase you can't desave me; mind that, too! I'd know it, if you did, by the same manes I knew all you thried afore now. An' listen to more from me. Tell Miss Eliza Hartley, it's for her sake I'm hindherin' her from marryin' Sir William Judkin. Tell her, that if she ever calls him husband, woe an' desthruction 'ill come upon her and her's, root an' branch. An' now go your ways, an' say your prayers for thanks that you get off so azy."

"Musha, my honey pet"—

"Go along, you ould, snakin' pretender!"—and, at a push through the branches, she inhaled the air of freedom. Nanny turned not to the right nor to the left. Nor did she for an instant slacken her utmost speed, but ambled along, like a rat that had just left part of his tail in a trap, until she reached her own lone cabin, a dwelling seldom tenanted. And then, closing and barring her clumsy door, and dropping on a three-legged stool, she devoutly crossed her forehead, thumped her breast, raised her shadowy eyes to Heaven, and, not forgetful of Bill's parting advice, poured forth, for her miraculous escape, as hearty a thanksgiving as had ever passed her lips on any former occasion.

The day, the evening lapsed, and, for the first time during the last forty years, Nanny the Knitter was not seen abroad. To avoid her sworn enemy, was the old woman's predominant instinct, and in it the habits of a life became temporarily absorbed. Even for

the better part of the next day she did not stir out. And when at last tempted across her threshold, it was in the company of neighbours who, much alarmed at her sudden disappearance from the high-roads, short cuts, and holes of the parish, had come took se her in her barricadoed cabin.

But confidence gradually returned to her heart, and in its influence the possessing selfishness of terror somewhat abated, and permitted her to think of the application to others of her whole fearful adventure under the umbrella lime-tree. "Her darlin' of a poor crature, the honey, Miss Eliza!—What was to be done in her regard?—Must she remain ignorant of the plot against her? And the hansome pet of a Sir William?—Did that terrible man mean that even from Eliza's ear Nanny was to keep secret all she had overheard? If so, why commaud her to bear a message to her fair young patroness, evidently connected with the conversation between him and Capt'n Square Talbot?" And here Nanny recollected, in shuddering emotion, that she was as firmly bound to do what Bill Nale had commanded, as she was not to do what he had interdicted; and, at the thought, up she rose from her stool, and softly trudged off to Hartley Court, determined to deliver his embassy at least—"an' the mercies direct her in the rest."

Upon the road, it strongly occurred to her that, in the present state of affairs, she had better not seek to closet herself with Eliza, lest, when the fact became ascertained by a certain person—and ascertained it surely would be—she might fall under his censure. Nanny therefore hoped and prayed for a rencounter with Miss Hastley, quite by chance, upon some neutral ground, outside the house. Nor was she disappointed in her laudable and prudent wishes. The object of her mission appeared, seated beneath her favourite ash-tree, buxom Spring budding and bursting around her, and she looking a very deity to call forth, and to breathe life, and freshness, and beauty upon leaf, flower, and blossom.

In an uninterrupted whisper, which the bird on the next branch could not overhear, Nanny delivered the message of Rattling Bill. It begot, of course, many questions and inquiries from the listener: Nanny was sore pressed, between her great fear of her tyrant, and her as great inclination to answer at full length, as well out of sincere anxiety for her patroness, as out of pure yearning to tell a story, and a wonderful story, in which, strictly speaking, she had herself been the heroine. Eliza urged her cross-examination. The old woman hesitated, and hemmed, and groaned, and rocked herself backward and forward, at questions she had, in the first in-

stance, skilfully evaded. Eliza persevered; her manner became energetic from fear and doubt; tears flooded her eyes; and Nanny, casting her vague orbs all round, after every sentence, at length detailed circumstantially, as we have given it, but in her own usual way, the whole adventure.

It was told, the afflicted gossip had departed, and Eliza remained motionless on her seat under the ash-tree. Consternation filled her thoughts and her bosom. Something fell at her feet and rustled in the grass. She picked up a piece of crumpled paper; she opened it and read—

"Upon matters the most vital to you, I come to speak one word. But though now looking on you, I would not intrude without thus preparing you for my appearance.

"H. T."

She had scarce perused the lines when the writer of them sprang over the fence of the adjacent grove, and, bowing, stood before her. Eliza just had sufficient self-command to control a loud and long scream, the instinctive outbreak of her previous consternation. But the first struggle of a new passion—indignation and contempt for the person who thus intruded on her—checked her frenzy, and otherwise shaped her voice and conduct.

"Out of the path, Sir!" she cried, casting his billet to her feet, as she sprang up.

"I plead but for one word, Miss Hartley—but one word!" said Talbot, in a tone and manner of the humblest supplication.

"Back, Sir!" She proudly swept by him with a firm step. "Long since we have come to an understanding. And, even were it not so, with the associate of a mean knave and villain, I hold no converse!"

"The connexion is indeed, or seems to be, degrading to me; but it comes from necessity, not choice," he replied, following her.

"Explain to others, Sir! I ask no explanation at your hands; and beg you will not thus force your attendance upon me. Do you hear me, Sir?"—as he gained her side.

"I must disobey you, Miss Hartley—must bear you company to the last moment when I can do so without observation."

Not once looking on him, she quickened her pace—every pace brought her nearer to home—her head erect, her brow knit, her cheeks flushed, and her bosom heaving.

"I am forced, Miss Hartley, by your own infatuation, into that very connexion," he continued. "I am forced—if you do not pity

me, and protect yourself—to be a participator in ac's which must sink me to the level of that very wretch! Save me, Eliza!—at present I ask—I entreat but little from you. I ask that you be but deliberate in your arrangements with my rival—that you take time"—

"This is unbearable!" she muttered, while a deeper colour dyed her cheeks.

"Think of me as you will, I have no alternative but this plain mode of speaking. No other alternative to shield you, your Father, and myself from destruction."

"You threaten, Sir? You would scare us with plots contrived by you and your worthy fellow?"

"Break the fellowship, Eliza! break it at one word. Restore me to myself!—Promise what I have requested! Defer"—

"Until your plans be perfected?"

"No! I seek not to profit by the delay. But there is dreadful danger in a refusal."

"I contemn it."

She was raising the latch of the orchard-door. The voice of her favoured lover pronouncing her name, echoed from the adjoining garden.

"Hark, Sir!" she said, in a ringing whisper, as she laid one finger on her lip, pointed with the other towards the garden, and flashed upon Talbot a glance of mingled triumph, consciousness of protection, and bitter taunt.

He started at the voice of his rival, yet almost instantly seized her hand. She had stepped over the threshold of the orchard-door, and struggled spiritedly to free herself. Talbot continued, during the struggle, to speak in snatches.

"Your simple promise would have saved you from an avowal of the cause of my urgency; which now must be made, even though it wither your heart to hear. Which now must be made though you die under it,—and though I foresee many other miserable results from the rash disclosure. But listen, listen, Eliza Hartley!"—his closely whispered words pierced her ear like the hiss of a serpent,—"You are about to wed—the husband of another!"

He dropped her hand and precipitately withdrew. But he could now have held that hand without an effort to retain it. She stood mute and motionless as a statue. Her posture, the deadly paleness of her cheeks and the vagueness of her eyes, formed a striking contrast to her late haughty and spirited vivacity. She felt the blood coldly rushing through every vein, until it settled in a sickening mass

about her heart. Her head drooped, and she would have fallen, but that the voice of Sir William Judkin again reached her. The instinct of avoidance rallied her strength. She staggered into the middle of the orchard; flung herself to a shade formed by encircling fruit-bushes; and, panting for breath, crouched close. In a few seconds, the footsteps of him she now dreaded—"of the husband of another," bounded past her, and were lost to her ear, after having issued through a door that led to grounds at the back of the house. She sprang up—ran—flew to her chamber—locked and bolted her door, and sank on her bed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Returning to the house, after his vain search through garden, orchard, grove and shrubbery, Sir William urged Eliza's aunt to seek her in her chamber. The good lady found her niece in a highly feverish state. All became panic and bustle. Her father flew to her pillow. Sir William mounted his fleetest horse, and brought back the head physician of a rather remote town. Upon the return of the gentleman from the patient's bed-side, the terrified lover learned that there was no extreme danger. And then he sent a pressing, entreating message, for one word, one glance—only one.

Eliza's Father held her throbbing hand when the message was delivered, and he could not misinterpret the start—the shrink—the shudder, the closing of eye, and the averting of head, with which, in utter silence, she received it.

Tenderly he sought his child's confidence. His tears, while he murmured his entreaties, wetted her brow. Answering tears sprang to her relief; she became somewhat collected, and began to confide to her Father the cause of her emotion.

From first to last, Sir Thomas became acquainted with all the details of the intimacy between Talbot and the juggler, of which, from her own observations on the review-ground, and subsequently from Nanny's gossip, Eliza was aware. She paused, and he could make little of her communication so far. Though matter of some alarm, it evidently was not what had produced her present agitation.

And, during her pause, Eliza wondered at herself for making this information a preface to the real theme. It seemed as if she

were preparing to arraign Harry Talbot, instead of his rival. And why should she not? A relieving light burst in! The mere assertion of her lover's treachery and infamy had at the moment struck her powerless, and left her no presence of mind to try the accusation by the test of the character and probable motives of the accuser. But now restored to self-possession, and after having gone over, in her statements to her Father, the particulars of Talbot's degrading connexion with the mountébank, and of their secret conversations together, it was evident that, at least without proof, she could not be called upon to believe the word of Talbot. Since he had lost himself so far as to plot against her and Sir William, in nison with one of the lowest of men, he might naturally sink lower still, by inventing a false accusation to promote his plans.

Her father watched Eliza's change of features during her reverie. He saw her eye light up with its old beam of vivacity; he saw her clasp her hands in joy. She spoke again, in a changed voice, and rapidly told, with vindicating comments, drawn from her recent thoughts, rather than as a story to be credited by the hearer, the dreadful charge preferred against her lover by his rival.

A second time she was silent, her eye raised questioningly to her father's face. He smiled, and kissed her affectionately, and her heart experienced full relief. The parental caress partly came from joy at her rallied spirits and promised health, partly from the conviction that indeed Eliza had nothing to fear.

She clung to his stooped neck, and fervently returned his salutation. He folded her in his arms, and softly foretold that her hopes would be realized; that her former suitor had framed or too readily credited a falsehood to injure his happy rival; and that few days would elapse until, triumphantly cleared of the slander, Sir William and she would, hand in hand, once more be on the road to happiness. Meantime, he agreed with her, that farther communication should cease between them. Having pressed his lips to her brow again, he left her smiling through delicious tears.

He left her to seek Sir William Judkin. They met in the drawing-room, in Miss Alicia's presence. Bluntly, and without unnecessary ceremony, the parent entered on his subject.

"Alicia, my dear, our beloved is better; and I dare promise, will be glad to see you."

"Thank God!" the young lover said, in unfeigned ecstasy, as the equally delighted old lady, hurrying to see her darling, tapped her tiny heels over the carpet, in a quicker succession of sound than they usually produced.

"Now, Sir William, we are alone. Learn, in a word, that Miss Hartley's illness concerns you more nearly than perhaps you suppose."

"I thought as much, Sir:—that is, her refusal to allow of my appearance even at the door of her chamber, filled me with doubts and fears of I know not what."

"Well; you shall now know the cause of her momentary abhorrence."

"Abhorrence, Sir Thomas!"

"Listen."—And the accusation was briefly stated. It had scarce been uttered, when, with all the quick energy of indignant innocence, the lover started to his feet. In unmeasured words, he denounced it as an atrocious slander. Sir Thomas observed him coolly and attentively, but not without interest.

"Name my infamous defamer!" cried the young man.

"I will, when you are calmer."

"I disclaim calmness, Sir Thomas! Name him, I say! only name him, and you shall see the coward dragged to your threshold, and there compelled to recant his falsehood!"

"We must proceed in a different manner, Sir William Judkin. In the first place, until the charge be formally refuted, you will perceive the necessity of avoiding any communication with Miss Hartley."

"*You* doubt me, then, Sir Thomas? *you* suppose me the villain this lie would make me?"

"No. If I did, even the present approach to explanation—even a word of it—should not pass under my roof. On the contrary, I have not a doubt but that, at the proper opportunity, you will prove yourself still worthy of all the happiness your best friends can wish you, Sir William."

He extended his hand, smiling gravely. The lover clasped it, bowed his head on it, pressed it to his heart, and, with tears in his handsome eyes, murmured expressions of deep gratitude; adding, "And I will not now inquire what may or may not be *her* present convictions on the subject."

"There, *I* thank *you* for your delicacy," said Sir Thomas.

"But though, just now, I denounced calmness," continued Sir William, "your comforting confidence *has* made me calm. Calm enough to repeat my requests for the name of my base accuser."

"There is still a degree of calmness which you have to attain," answered Sir Thomas, again smiling. "But, fear nothing. I pledge myself that you *shall* be satisfied. And, for the present, I require your pledge to keep secret, until the moment of investigation, the whole matter I have communicated."

"Well, dear Sir Thomas, I surrender myself wholly to your guidance, and I give the pledge."

"That is acting wisely, and as I would wish to see a son-in-law of mine depart himself. Now, let us change the topic. We dine together, and alone, this day. No refusal; I request your company. To-morrow I will call upon you, at your own door, to meet me in the measures I propose to take."

At the exact time that this conversation occurred at Hartley Court, another conference took place, in a secluded field, midway between that venerable mansion and Shawn-a-Gow's village, which portended a discomfiture, in a summary way, of the meeting proposed for the next morning between the two Baronets.

"I'm afeard o' my life, Bill Nale," said a tattered fellow, with a wooden leg, the same we have seen as Bill's accomplice at the review; "I'm afeard o' my life that you'll never make the *own-shuck*,* Davy Moore, go stoutly to the job."

"Hah!" answered his principal, "lave it to me. If I don't put him up to it, Davy is a wiser boy nor Bill Nale; an' *that* I'm for doubtin'."

"Couldn't we get more help?" asked wooden-leg.

"No; we couldn't!—an' did you hear me, then? ar'n't all our own *roolacks*† too far off? Not a sowl, in these parts, 'ud rise a finger agin any thing next or near to the Hartleys; an' they have a regard for the young thief himself. He's civil to 'em; an', along wid that, they think he's o' the same mind wid the ould Croppy, an' 'ud be for joinin' 'em at the risin'-out."

"Well; I see we must do it ourselves."

"An' more nor that, too. A sthranger,—barrin' one we can manage, like Davy Moore—'ud be askin' questions—an' questions we can't answer. He moost vanish as if the ground opened and swallowed him."

"Aye, by the deed! an' sure you're the person most concarned, so I lave it to you.'

"The night'll be dark," said Bill.

"The moon is clane out these three nights. An' we wanted cat's eyes last night to do our business in the grove."

"An' the *codger*‡ 'ill have the horse and car at the cross?"

"He'll be there as soon as the dark comes thick; undher the shade o' the wood, an' beyant the little bridge, where you'll want to grope him out to find him."

* Silly person, † Desperate characters. ‡ A crabbed little boy.

"Then, here's the good plan, Sam Timbertoe. His honour is more nor a match for the both of us together, barrin' we tipped him from his saddle, which we don't want to do this time. But Davy Moore is more nor his match again: he's as strong as a plough-horse. An' while he grips the blade, an' houlds him tight an' fast, you an' myself 'ill put him in a way that a child might manage him. Then, up on the codger's car he goes, an' the wind won't ketch us till he lies sthretched at his ase undher the ould walls of Dunbrody. Afther it's done, Sam, besides what you know, there's goold in Square Talbot's purse."

"Betther an' betther, by the deed!"

"Come on, the stick-leg to help you at a pinch."

"Aye; an' it's often it helped me to clear the way through a crowd, when I'd get the use o' my limbs of a sud'n."

"Well, then, off wid you, an' be at the spot in time."

"I will, by the deed!"

And Mr. Sam Timbertoe hobbled away upon the subject of his recent eulogy, and his chief shaped his course to the cabin of Poll Beehan, "the mother o' Davy Moore, the Waver."

The dwelling was far from being so very wretched as Irish cabins generally are. The husband had been a good tradesman, and, occasionally, an industrious man. Upon setting out in the world, he rented four or five acres of a hill-side, that rose over the village, and in some of the intervals of his occupation as a weaver, he had reclaimed, from time to time, the meagre sod. As this possession was held on moderate terms, he could support a cow or two, and join their product to his handicraft earning, so that people called him and his wife "a thriving couple." One only fault he had:—he would "break out," as the periodical fit was termed, "and drink to the last farthing" Poll Beehan permitted him to lay his hands on. Yet, when the paroxysm passed away, he could return to his loom very soberly, and work, work, work, almost without wetting his lips during double the time of its endurance. Taken altogether, his lapses did not, however, permit of as much success in the world as the neighbours gave him credit for. He died; and the widow prospered better than the wife had done. His only child, Davy, inherited his industry, without his bacchanalian irregularities: by dint of her darling's solid perseverance, from year's end to year's end, Poll Beehan really grew to be a rich woman. And if Davy derived his industry from his father, to his mother he was indebted for his unmeasured credulity in the marvellous. To cheer his sickly pensive childhood, she had unsparingly poured into his mind

all the tales of fairy lore with which her own overflowed: and as from infancy to manhood he never mixed with the world, but almost exclusively depended for companionship upon her and his loom, the impressions thus received, and constantly kept up, reduced him to such a state of miserable imbecility, that he feared supernatural injury in every blast of wind; and would run, at his best speed, if the straws on the road happened to be stirred by the breeze into those tiny whirlings so frequently observable.

Between his mother and him, their cabin was the very abode of whispering superstition. There was a horse-shoe nailed on the threshold for good-luck. Bundles of old iron, that had been found abroad from time to time, hung up about the walls for the same talismanic purpose. A cross of platted straw presided over the door-post; and these and other symptoms proclaimed at a glance, to the experienced eye, the besotted yet ludicrous humours of the inmates.

The whizzing of Poll Beehan's wheel, with which she was winding yarn on spindles, preparatory to its being fixed in the loom, prevented her from hearing Bill Nale's approach, until his harsh voice sounded just at her ear.

"Hah! Poll, you ould sinner, where's the son?"

"Ah, thin, save you kindly, Sir, my jewel, an' sure you'll sit yoursef down;"—with much appearance of deferential fuss, drawing forward one of her * *suggan*-bottomed chairs. "Davy!" calling into the inner room, where he was at work—"Davy, come wid speed. Ah, thin, Sir, it's little good he's doin', with the fear o' what's hangin' over him. Davy! why don't you make haste?"

"Oh, what ails you, mother?" moaned Davy within, shuffling to disentangle himself from the loom.

"Come down here, till I be spakin' to you!" cried Nale. "It's myself, Poll Beehan, is the boy to get him clear o' what's hangin' over him. I was among 'em in Sculloch-Gap last night, an' settled the job intirely."

"Och, may you be rewarded, Sir, an' have blessins on your road!"

"Never an ould *colloch* that comes acrass me but is mighty open-handed wid her prayers; but who's the fool to care for the waggin o' sich sole-leather tongues? Did you put your yallow claw into the stockin' for me? that's the talk."

"I'm a poor, lone widow-woman, an', a little while ago, my good cow was overlooked, an' I lost her. An' it's little sich as me has, barrin' what"—

* Suggan—Hay-rope.

"Poh! I could count to the farthen, for you, what's in the ould blue stock'n, in the chest that I was spakin' of. Go an' crook out two balloons,* or *Moya Critha* may crook Davy into the hill. An' much good may her prize do her!"

"Och, thin! sure, sure," rocking backward and forward on her stool, and continuing to repeat twice almost every word, as a kind of accompaniment to her see-saw motion; while she clasped her hands round her knees, that reached nearly to her chin;—"sure, sure, if it cum to my turn to beg 'em from dour to dour, on my bare knees, by fardens at a time, it's mysef, mysef, aroon, the poor, lone mother of him, wouldn't let that misfort'ne of all misfort'nes, come on my poor, clane, likely boy—Och, Davy!" addressing him as he slowly entered; "you poor crature, sure, sure, it isn't the poor widow, wid the one son, wid the one son! 'ud stop her hand to dhraw the heart's blood, if it was to save him!"

"Och, mother! don't make sich a *keenthecaun* on me, afore my time, any how," remonstrated Davy. "Don't be cryin', mother, don't be cryin'."

"Get up out o' that!" cried Bill Nale, "an' go do what I bid you. An' let Davy stay here, an' be said by me, an' I'll keep him from all harum, for you."

The poor woman slowly arose, and left the room, to comply with the knave's exorbitant demand—exorbitant, indeed, considering that during twenty years she had saved forty pounds, and was now compelled to give up the careful scrapings-together of two whole years of that period. Perhaps, sincere as was her pathos on Davy's account, the thought added a pang to it. "Now, Davy, my boy," said Nale, after she had departed, "I am goin' to tell you the way you'll keep clear o' Moya Critha. You an' I must go to-night, handy, to Sir Thomas Hartley's gate; an' as I was tould by them that knows it, a brave young squire 'ill be comin' by, ridin' on a horse. You're a big, sthrong boy, an', besides, you'll have good help from friends o' mine that you won't see. Ah', now, would you mind mooch o' doin' a thing to him 'ill be ridin' by, jist to save yourself from the ugliest ould spawn that's to be found among the whole throop o' them in Sculloch-Gap?"*

"Oh, I'd do any thing to stay clear of her—any thing bud go out alone in the dark o' the night."

"Poh, man, I'll be at your elbow. We'll go there together; didn't I tell you so!"

* Guineas, then so called

"Oh, I'd run my head undher the hearth-stone," resumed Davy, slowly following up his last thought, "or I'd knock it agin the wall, so I would"—and he stood up and stupidly looked his readiness to brain himself,—"I would by my deed-an'-deed."

"Well then, Davy, listen to the long an' the short of it. Moya moost have you, or she moost have the other I tould you of, that she cast her unloocky eye on, the night afore the last. She doesn't care which now, but she won't wait, an' she can't touch *him*, by rason of a charum he got from a fairy-docther, unless a Christian puts a hand round him, an' gives him to her. So, if you don't come wid me to-night, an' lay hoult o' this lad, you're a lost an' gone boy, for ever an' ever, an' that's all I have to say to you."

"An' will any other harum come to me, by it?"

"Duoul take you"—Bill began, very angrily.

"Lord forbid!" said Davy, crossing himself.

"Well—no matther whether he does or no! D'ye think I'd bring you into harum, afther keepin' you safe an' sound so long? So, say will you come or no?"

"I'll ax my mother on the head of it."

"Do if you daare! Spake one word to mother, or to livin' sowl, an' you'll be crippled to the size o' my fist."

"Oh, Lord save us! Well, if you come an' take me, an' keep me out of all harum, I'll go wid you."

"That's right! have courage, an', by to-morrow mornin' you'll be your own man agin. To be sure I'll come for you. You'll hear my whistle, at the back o' the cabin, afther nightfall. An' now, here's the mother, an' take care o' your tongue, I bid you." Just now Poll Beehan entered.

"Hah! have you the balloons, Poll Beehan?"

He received and pocketed the fee. "Well! to-morrow Davy may sit down to the loom wid a light heart. An' so, here goes to be off."

And he quitted the house of waking dreams and superstitious tremblings,—leaving Davy to meditate on the adventure in which he had engaged, and his mother to rock herself backward and forward at the idea of the expense to which Moya Critha's unfortunate passion for her comely son had so unceremoniously reduced her.

During dinner at Hartley Court, Sir Thomas did not make an allusion to the occurrences of the day. The whole conversation, which he nearly engrossed, referred to the unsettled state of the country. His son-in-law elect, apparently respecting the delicate and high-minded feeling that, until all parties stood as they had

stood before, would not even name the heiress of Hartley Court, or utter a word which might bring in her name, demeaned himself with a becoming gravity of manner, highly to his advantage in the observant eyes of his host. They separated at a reasonable hour; and the unusually cordial and lengthened pressure of their hands, upon the threshold, was the sole interchange, during the evening, of the thoughts and sentiments that absorbed both.

Slowly, and with none of his usual elasticity of bound, did Sir William seat himself in his saddle. Having passed the avenue-gate of Hartley Court, the reins fell from his hands, his head drooped on his breast, and his horse paced soberly towards home.

At a short distance on, the road was bounded to the right by a copse-wood of oak that sloped down a hill to the Slaney's brink: to the left, a precipitate acclivity, also thickly clothed with wood, threw a shadow across the way, even at noon, and now trebled the darkness of, considering the time of the year, a very dark night. Through the almost rayless pass, the animal slackened his pace. Suddenly he plunged backward, and ere his master could snatch up the bridle from his neck, a pair of colossal arms dragged him to the road, and there encircled his body with a grasp of iron.

"Unloose me, villain!" Sir William cried in vain. And vain, too, were his struggles, his writhings, and bendings, to get free. The bulky person of his captor crushed closer against him, at every effort. The giant arms, passing over his, pinioned him altogether.

"Hould your grip, boy, an' the job is done," said a voice, of which some of the cadences were not unfamiliar to him. Again he struggled, and again the clasping muscles closed tighter round his person. The broad chest heaved quickly against his; the laborious grinding of teeth was at his ear; and the man's chin pressed and forced down his shoulder, until Sir William almost lost the power of motion of any kind.

In a few seconds, he felt other hands catching his wrists; and once more he vainly writhed through every joint, as he asked—"What is the reason of this outrage? Why am I thus seized on?"

"Thonomon Duoul! have you it?" said the voice he had heard before, evidently not speaking to him.

The single monosyllable "Yes," came softly in answer.

"On wid it, quick, then!" and Sir William felt his hands forced behind him. Horrible fears inspired nature with a last effort: he raised himself upon his toes, and, with all his strength, pushed forward. The heavy frame that pressed him almost to suffoca-

tion, fell back with a dead sound, upon the road; but he fell along with it; and still the herculean arms hugged him desperately. And in this situation, notwithstanding continued struggles, Sir William's hands were finally tied behind his back, and his legs also manacled.

"Let go now, my boy; your work is done clane," he heard growled into the ear of the fellow by whom he was held. Instantly the grasp became loosened, and his first captor, allowing him to roll over on the road, slowly arose.

"An' I may go home to my mother now?" said or questioned this person.

"Go your ways, boy, an' snap your fingers at Moya Critha."

"Oh, the Lord be praised!" and Sir William saw the Colossus shamble away from the scene.

"Explain this outrage?" he cried to the worthies who stood over him.

"Hould your tongue, you spawn o' the Duoul! You'll know it afore day-dawn, an' to your cost."

As the speaker ceased, he gave a shrill whistle, and he and his companion stood silently a few paces from their captive. "I perceive you intend something more than robbery," Sir William said.

"An' you may swear that. Bud, Sam, we'll take the offer. Come, show us the linin' o' your pockets."

There was a chuckling assent; as they stooped over him, Sir William, notwithstanding the dense gloom, and even the precautions the men had taken to disguise their features, thought he recognised a rather well-known countenance. Their plundering search ended, and his suspicions fearfully increased.

"An', so, the Duoul have you! would nothin' in the world sarve you bud to come here a coortin'?"

"Is that my offence?"

"Hah! by the livin' farmer, you'll soon know it is, if a grave can be dug deep in Dunbrody."

"Villain! Now I know your motive, or, rather, the motive of your employer, Talbot!"

"Don't bother no more; wait till you larn. Sam, where's that young thief of a codger? Sleepin' on the car maybe; so I'll whistle again."

He sounded another shrill call; listened, and heard it answered. "Aye; he's commin' at last. Is the other rope ready?"

"Ready noosed, by the deed," he was answered, in a mild under-

"Bud stop," said Bill, again listening; "there's no car afther the horse that's comin' on us!"

"Hallo! Where are you?" shouted stentorian lungs, at a little distance; and, almost instantly, a horseman trotted briskly up.

"Hell an' the Duoul!" muttered Bill.

"Help, traveller, help!" cried Sir William Judkin; "help! I lie bound hand and foot, by murderous villains!"

"O-ho! is that it?" The rider, a very tall and athletic man, jumped from his saddle. "Then help you shall have, in the name of God, whoever you are."

In a second, Bill was stuck in his collar; and Sam, twisting off the wooden leg, and standing stoutly upon two of good bone and muscle, poised over the intruder's head, seriously and malignly, the formidable weapon. But, at his first touch, Sir William's champion swung the juggler across the road; and, ere Sam could inflict his meditated blow, his leg (strange to say!) was wrested out of his hand, and an agile jump aside scarce saved him from the effects of its agency in the grasp of its new possessor.

"Run for it!" whispered Bill; "no chance this bout!" Darting into the copse that fell to the river, they either concealed themselves near at hand, or easily escaped.

The combatant continued to flourish his weapon in the dark, making the air to whizz at each curve it described round his head, until the prostrate Sir William informed him he had now no enemy to contend with, and requested his assistance in freeing himself from his manacles.

"Upon my word, that I will do, my poor fellow, if I can find you out," replied his deliverer. "Ay; here you lie. This part of the proceeding," he continued, as he unknotted or cut the ropes, "is I believe, more cordial to my vocation than the first part of it; though I hope you will allow, considering my little practice in deeds of arms, that I behaved like a stout soldier. And now, there you are a free man. Come, your hand. Stand to your legs and shake yourself; for your coat must be well dusted."

"I have every reason to believe, Sir, that you have saved me from being cruelly murdered."

"So much the better, then. The attaining such an end, warrants even one of my calling to wield a warlike weapon; and I'm glad it turns out that I engaged on the right side. A matter, which, to tell nothing but the truth, I did not at first take time to consider."

"I judge by your speech, Sir, that I have to thank a clergyman for this timely aid?"

"Ay, Sir; a Priest, as you must know we are distinctively styled. And, according to the fashion of the times, I am called Priest Rourke by those who, holding us least in love or liking, are the most familiar with us."

"I am called Sir William Judkin, Mr. Rourke. And, as long as I am so called, your ever grateful friend henceforward."

"O-ho! ay, indeed?" in a jocular tone, as he shook the hand extended to him; "we've heard of the name, Sir William, and in company with another, we believe. Why, Sir, you and I are old friends, of years standing; half a score such cowards as ran away, just now, should not injure Sir Thomas Hartley's friend in my presence;—that is, when a case of necessity might warrant a big priest in using the bones and sinews God has given him. But what's this that helped me out, in your service, awhile ago? A curious kind of weapon, I protest now: to judge by its feel, and the view afforded of it this dark night, part of a wooden leg, I think."

"Indeed, Mr. Rourke! Let us preserve it, then. It may furnish a clue to the detection of its late owner."

"'Tis so, certainly. Here is the end for stumping on the ground, and this screw at the other end must have fastened it to the remainder of the machine. And see here; another spoil," picking up a hat; "and both mine, by all the laws of war!"

"Yet I request both from you, Mr. Rourke; the hat may particularly aid my inquiries."

"Well, I yield them, without any such lengthened contest as took place between the sly Ulysses and the dogged Ajax for the armour of their great bully. Just leave me my weapon, however, Sir William, while I escort you home. There may be another case of necessity for flourishing it in your behalf. And so, here I go, with a leg under my arm."

"Well, Mr. Rourke, if pressing business does not interfere, you are my guest for the night," said Sir William, as, without farther interruption, they arrived at his house.

"With all my heart, then. I was only going to see some friends who scarce expect me, so they will not be alarmed if I don't appear; and as my old housekeeper at home saw me set off not to return till morning, she won't be frightened either. Your guest I am, therefore, Sir William."

"A most welcome one, Mr. Rourke."

"I am glad I can oblige you and myself, at one and the same time."

They soon sat down to supper.

"And my old friend, Sir Thomas, is so well, you tell me?" said Mr. Rourke, rubbing his hands after a bumper of good claret.

"I left him quite well, an hour ago."

"Heartily glad am I to hear it, Sir William, heartily glad. If all our gentlemen resembled him, we should not see the poor country in the state it is."

"The times certainly begin to wear a frightful aspect, Mr. Rourke."

"And will wear a more frightful one, Sir William. Do I speak to a friend of the poor people?"

"You do, Sir—and to an enemy of their enemies."

"Then tell me, Sir, what are the poor people to do? As in duty bound, the greater number of their priests exert themselves to put down the Northern combination that has crept in among them. But others won't let the priests do their work. The people are set mad—I am set half-mad, myself—by the burning and flogging and pitching and hanging that goes on, day after day."

"In good truth, Mr. Rourke, I believe that some wise heads promote that very madness by the means you specify, for the purpose of driving the people into detached and futile insurrections. That, so, one collected and well-directed blow may not be levelled at their power."

"What those wise ones mean, I do not understand. But this I understand. Whether the story we are told of the Orangeman's oath be true or not, Orangemen act as if it were true—act as if literal extermination of the people was their wish and object. And this I also understand,—that if the people passively submit—if they wait to be all scourged or scalped, or half or whole hanged, or shot, I do not know them, and it will be a wonder to me. Tell me, Sir William!"—he stood up, and looked fiercely on his host,—"which is it better for a man—to die on his own green sod, fighting against his cruel enemies; or stay at home, to be flogged like a negro, or strung by the neck, the blaze of his own cabin to glare on his death throes?"

Proportioned to his tall, robust, and powerful figure, the speaker had naturally a boldly-marked countenance, with a brow that could frown daringly, and a strong, intrepid eye. Yet the mixture of bluff good-humour and candour which ran through his deportment, generally tamed his features and glances into a pleasing expression,

ray from his high carriage and formidable figure all
sternness or ferocity that might otherwise attach to
ct, Nature had intended him for a bold, generous

soldier: a mistake had made him a clergyman. And, true to his original impress, Father Rourke, upon the first insurrectionary explosion in the County of Wexford, changed into "Father Capt'n Rourke." Flinging aside, with ease and eagerness, the cumbrous sacerdotal character, he sprang into that which had been his primitive destiny, and became, and continued to be, locally distinguished as the most daring and skilful of the few Roman Catholic priests who, in the year 1798, joined and headed the raging people.

CHAPTER XXV.

Sir Thomas Hartley, quite sincere in his professsions to Sir William Judkin, believed that Harry Talbot and Rattling Bill were, generally speaking, acting in concert to prevent the union of his daughter with the young Baronet. He did not, however, so readily conclude, to the utter disgrace and degradation of a person whom he had once called his friend, that, in the charge made upon his rival's character, Talbot uttered what he conceived to be a deliberate falsehood. Sir Thomas rather supposed that the dice-thrower, in the hope of gain, was the original author of the slander; and that his patron, blinded and rendered credulous by contending passions, had accepted it, without examination, at his hands; and then, in the vague impulse for revenge, had rashly communicated it to his former mistress.

As a preliminary step to the course he intended to pursue, Sir Thomas dispatched a messenger, at an early hour next morning, to secure the person of Nale. His own warrant, as a magistrate, was the legal authority for the arrest.

Bill was easily found. He had taken up his abode in one of those humble village hotels which exhibit, in their green glass window of two panes, a couple of dingy loaves of bread, with perhaps an equal number of salt herrings, by way of supporters to the shield, standing on their heads, because their tails would not keep them up; with, in the upper pane, a tobacco-pipe, forming one side of a triangle, of which another is a tallow-candle of the value of one halfpenny. And over the door of such an establishment may be seen a clumsy piece of board, its ground dim-red, containing white letters indifferently marked thereon, and a third of them

mounted, at one side, above the others,—most falsely denoting, that "good beds for travellers" are to be found under the black thatch-roof of the miserable cabin. It might be supposed, indeed, that the proprietor, half ashamed of his announcement, or the artist of being a party to it, had shrunk from stating the falsehood broadly upon the sign-board. A good portion of the letters seemed to avoid scrutiny, in order to supply, like ill-worded wills or bonds, in case of the morning remonstrance of a beguiled traveller, a point of legal debate as to the true intent and meaning of the whole declaration. But how far is this from our purpose.

Without exhibiting the least alarm, or even surprise, the juggler quietly, and with a few jeers, suffered himself to be taken prisoner. According to the instructions of Sir Thomas, he was conducted to the house of a neighbouring magistrate and Captain of Yeomanry, to be dealt with, upon the arrival of the Baronet and his witnesses, as a common vagrant, and disturber of his Majesty's peace. So spoke Sir Thomas Hartley's warrant; and so spoke the private note he addressed to Magistrate Captain Whaley.

If Sir Thomas was regarded by the peasantry as one likely to be their friend in time of necessity, he was by the loyal part of the community considered as any thing but a zealous supporter of Government. It is therefore probable, that his unadmiring brother-magistrate might have sent back the case and the offender, for his own exclusive disposal, did it not seem likely that the well-known Rattling Bill would prove to be an important agent of the spreading disaffection. He was accordingly ordered into close custody.

Sir Thomas next wrote to Harry Talbot. The letter stated that Miss Hartley had informed him of the accusation made against Sir William Judkin; and he called upon him, as a man of honour, as a Christian, and as a former friend, to meet him, by a certain hour, at Captain Whaley's, and there submit his proofs of the startling assertion. Having so far taken his measures, Sir Thomas ordered his horse, and proceeded, according to arrangement, to call upon his son-in-law elect.

The young Baronet, and his deliverer of the previous night, had but just breakfasted, when Sir Thomas joined them. Mutual greetings were exchanged between all; and then Sir Thomas learned the attempt upon the person of his young friend, the timely succour of Father Rourke, and every other circumstance. Opinions were passed as to the instigator and perpetrators of the outrage. Sir Thomas shrank from naming Talbot, with reference to the former: but slight doubt existed in his mind, that in the person of

Nale he had already secured one of the latter. The wooden-leg gave as yet little light; but the hat, half stuffed with straw and rags, and containing "The London Sheet Lottery" folded up in its crown, proclaimed, as loudly as indirect evidence could do, that Bill Nale, along with other misdeeds, had now to account for a brilliant affair of highway robbery.

The priest would be a very necessary witness upon this new charge against the hustling dice-thrower, and he accordingly set out with the two Baronets for the abode of Captain Whaley.

Sir Thomas reckoned but little on the co-operation of this gentleman, either in his capacity of magistrate, or as a man of judgment and intellect. Captain Whaley was indeed one of those to whom, in the absence or disqualification of individuals better fitted for the trust, Irish magisterial authority was heretofore, more so than at present it is, too often deputed. He could not boast of high descent: neither was he wealthy, nor possessed of much hereditary estate. In early life, at least, he had been but little habituated to the usage or manners of polished society; and, now that an unnatural state of things gave him sudden and unnatural eminence, he did not grace by intellect, by deportment, or by speech, his new station.

In truth, he stood indebted for all his present importance to his zeal and success in raising, from among the dregs of the very loyal of his parish, a yeomanry corps, of which we have before now heard, if we have not seen it—namely, "The poor Ballybreehone Cavalry." Once dubbed a captain, his commission of the peace followed, in those anomalous times, as a matter of course. And if his personal demeanour did not well agree with his novel rank, neither was his newly-acquired power exercised with that modest and wise temperance which confers upon power of every degree its most useful as well as most dignified feature. In Captain Whaley's philosophy, the sweets of power lay in its display; its best manifestation, in the extent of terror it inspired. But, after all, he was perhaps, according to the system of his day, an efficient soldier-magistrate.

As our party entered Captain Whaley's handsome mansion, Rattling Bill—his hands thrust into his breast, one leg carelessly flung across the other, and on his head, although worn rakishly to one side, certainly not the same hat he had on when last we saw him—leaned his back against the table in the hall. A scoffing leer twisted his features as he glanced towards the new-comers. With perfect coolness he slowly withdrew one of his hands, doffed his recently-assumed beaver, and bestowing upon each of our friends

a separate nod of recognition,—"I'm mighty glad to see your honours brave an' hearty!" he said. Then, replacing the fearless hat, he quietly reassumed, in all its particulars, his first position.

"Have you ever seen that face before, Mr. Rourke?" questioned Sir Thomas aside.

"It was so dark, and the time for investigation so short, I cannot be positive that he is one of my late antagonists. Yet I believe he is," the priest answered.

Sir William Judkin, whatever might be his motive, did not yet state the suspicions which, during the occurrence that put him in such peril, we attributed to him.

"But," resumed the priest, "I will ask the worthy a question. I saw you inside a hedge, on the road near Hartley Court, early last night,—did I not, Sir?"

"Maybe you did, plase your reverence. Though, as you say, the night was dark from the biggin'n', and it's hard to tell. But, likely enough. An' there's somethin' like a dhrame come into my head that I seen you too, last night, arly or late as it may turn out to be."

"We met afterwards, then? You *are* the man that collared me?"

"Hah, hah! be asy now, your reverence."

"Come out o' that, an' none o' your cross-questions," said one of the slovenly-attired, but determined-looking yeomen, who guarded the prisoner.

"Whom do you speak to, fellow?" questioned Father Rourke.

"To a Croppy priest," said another.

The priest drew up his athletic person, flashed from one to another of the speakers a frown of angry defiance, and then turned on his heel.

"We had best proceed in our business," resumed Sir Thomas. "Pray," addressing a disengaged yeoman, "inform Captain Whaley that Sir Thomas Hartley desires to see him."

As the man with a surly compliance opened a door off the hall, a violent clashing of swords was heard, and between every loud jingle of the weapons a voice, louder and harsher, called out—

"Split the roof of the helmet! Well done, Captain! A chop in the sword-arm! Well guarded, by the great Saizor! (Cæsar.) Across the smeller, now! Oh, capital, beautiful!"

"We have heard that voice apologizing for the Ballybreehone Cavalry at the review," whispered Sir Thomas to the young Baronet.

"Jest desire him to walk in," answered Captain Whaley, to the

man who announced our party. As they entered the magisterial room, Captain Whaley yet held in his hand his naked sword; this, however, at their appearance, he sent with a sounding jerk into its scabbard, as if to demonstrate his familiarity with the weapon, or glorying in the noise it made.

"Practising a little at the sword-exercise, Sir Thomas," he said; "we'll have work in hand some o' these days, and soon, I hope; so one must know how to use the blade. Ay, ay! these Croppy dogs will make us busy enough; but we'll tame 'em. Take chairs, gentlemen, take chairs."

The individual with whom the Captain had been practising was, indeed, our old acquaintance of somewhat facetious memory in the review-field. At present, however, his appearance was altered for the better. Dressed *cap-à-pie*, as was his commander, in "the clothin'," of which, at our first introduction to him, he had so much bewailed the tardy furnishing and delivery by the tailors, he represented with considerable effect the character of a military person. Nay, he had been a real soldier, a real dragoon, in his early days; and hence his present office of disciplinarian, commencing with its Captain, to the Ballybreehoone Cavalry. Various were the rumours of the cause of his dismissal from regular service. Some would not call it dismissal; but rather leave-taking, or, vulgarly, desertion. Others allowed the term to stand, but attributed rank cowardice; others, theft. But, as the real cause was known only to himself, at least among his neighbours, he took credit for his own story—namely, that he had obtained enfranchisement from the duties and responsibilities of a private dragoon, in consequence of a deed of desperate bravery; and that he had preferred honourable retirement, to the offer a commission in his admiring regiment.

"I hope, however, that the opportunity will not soon occur for such desperate use of your weapon, Captain Whaley," said Sir Thomas; in reply to the observation that, in lieu of any others had greeted his entrance into the apartment.

"Be d——, Sir Thomas! but the opportunity exists this moment. Not a Papist in the county but is in a high fever of disaffection. They must be bled into loyalty. And that they will be; ha! ha! ha!"—a laugh at his own wit;—"eh, Saunders?"

"I deny your assertion, Captain Whaley," said the precipitate Father Rourke: "every Wexford Roman Catholic is not a rebel. Such as are, would grow wiser, if treated fairly."

"Who called for your opinion, Sir? Who sent for you? Have you any business with me, I wish to know?"

"Ask those at my side," answered the priest.

"Mr. Rourke is good enough to attend us as a material witness against a person in your custody, Captain Whaley," said Sir Thomas.

"Oh—ay!—the fellow abroad; I've seen him; I've had an eye on him; I've taken his measure. A rank Croppy, by ——! whatever else may be your charges against him, Sir Thomas. I'd know a Croppy through a fog a mile off; I'd pick him out of a crowd at a fair. When you've done with this hero, he has yet to get through my hands,. I can tell you—eh, Saunders? By ——! only we waited to show you sport, we'd have given him a taste o' the whipcord an hour ago? eh, Saunders? Saunders, you see, is installed whipcord-master, as well as disciplinarian to my corps, the Ballybreehoone cavalry. 'Tis said, he knows by experience, the sore spot between the shoulders: eh, Saunders?"

"Tie him up for me, Captain," said Saunders Smyly, "an' if I don't show him the art, an' tache him to spake, say I never saw a cat flyin' round a triangle."

"Or felt her claws at one—ha, ha!—eh, Saunders? What say you, Father Rourke?—No; but what ails you? Why, you seem to dislike the very name of a cat: though there's many that can't abide the animal, 'ill be better friends with her before long; ha! ha!—eh, Saunders?"

"Ay, by the great Saizor! the Ballybreehoone Cavalry 'ill be no slinkers at home. They'll do duty, or I don't know Capt'n Whaley."

"Right, Saunders. Be d—d! but I'll ferrit every Croppy out o' the parish."

"Then you will make more Croppies, Capt'n, than are to be found in the parish," said the priest, abruptly and warmly.

"What's that, Sir?" striding up to him; "be d——d, Sir! Priest Rourke, do you threathen me?" He now stood, a foot at least, under the dauntless-looking priest; slapped down, tight on his head, the horsehair decorated helmet he had not taken off at the entrance of our friends; and set his arms a-kimbo. "By ——, Sir! I'd have you to know, I'll listen to no such talk in this house. By ——, Misther Priest! the turn of a hand would make me tache you who you spake to, Sir!"

"Pah! pah!" was Mr. Rourke's answer, as he turned, and, at one or two immense strides, went to look out through the window.

The quick entrance of another Captain of yeoman-cavalry postponed the discussion between the zealous loyalist and the half-

Croppy priest. It was Talbot, clad, like the soldier-justice, in full uniform, but which, in contrast with the awkwardly ostentatious disposition of that of Captain Whaley, sat gracefully and familiarly on his erect, youthful person, and firm, well-shaped limbs.

The meeting between the rivals was on both sides unexpected. They started at the first view of one another, and interchanged glances which, could they have been concentrated, like the sun's summer rays, through some moral burning-glass, might be supposed, without much metaphorical licence, capable of darting, from each to each, a stroke of withering power. Yet these frowning regards were differently characterized. Talbot's expressed steady, contemptuous hatred, and haughty resolution; that of his enemy, as the colour went and came on his cheeks, was more flashing, and, it might be inferred, more eager, so to speak, for the instantaneous annihilation of its object.

Captain Whaley greeted cordially his young and loyal brother in arms. Mr. Rourke turned from the window during their mutual salutations, again joining his friends.

"Remember your pledge to me," whispered Sir Thomas to his agitated son-in-law elect,—for he had closely watched the effect produced on him by Talbot's sudden entrance, and justly feared a coming explosion.

Sir William, still following Talbot with a burning glare, although that person was now constrainedly speaking to Captain Whaley, started at the hint, paused an instant, and with a forced smile, bowed low in acquiescence.

Talbot began the dialogue.

"You see, Sir Thomas," he said coolly and sternly, "I have complied with your summons, however abrupt it may have been."

"I thank you for your prompt attendance, Sir," replied the Baronet. "And if the summons was abrupt, so has been the circumstance that made it necessary."

"Well, I grant you as much."

"This, then, is my accuser?" questioned Sir William.

"I am he who charged you with the base intent of deceiving into a mock marriage, while your real wife yet lives, an honourable and spotless lady," answered Talbot.

"Slanderer and liar!" began Sir William; but the voices of Sir Thomas and Captain Whaley together, interrupted him.

"Be d—d, gentlemen! what's all this? Bad business, by ——! eh. Saunders?—Croppyism at the bottom of it—I'll go bail: eh?"

"Sir William," remonstrated the old Baronet, "I have your solemn pledge to act with temper, dignity, and forbearance. The words you have spoken do not observe that pledge."

"'Tis better they should not," said Talbot; "they are something to remember."

"Do not forget them, then," rejoined his rival.

"You shall see," answered Talbot.

"Come, gentlemen," continued Sir Thomas, rather loftily "this is idle. Neither of you,—not even he who stands at my side, has a claim, a right, to set the issue of our present investigation upon a brawling quarrel. The heiress of Hartley Court is not to be the prize of a successful gladiator; if any one amongst us is entitled to advocate her, I alone am that person. I deny, in Miss Hartley's name, and my own, that any man, except her father, has yet a claim to be her champion. So patience, Sir William Judkin."

With outward humility, but with inward chafing, the rebuked lover again bowed low. Sir Thomas proceeded briefly to state to the magistrate the nature and particulars of the investigation over which he was called to preside. Scarce had he made an end of speaking, when Captain Whaley broke out—

"What, eh? Captain Talbot says that Sir William is a married man already!—Eh? yes; and Sir William denies the fact!—eh? yes,—again.—Then be d—d! there's one sting for another, and nothing else as yet,—eh, Saunders?"

"Captain Whaley puts the matter just as it stands," remarked Sir Thomas. "Proof of the assertion now becomes necessary."

"Sir Thomas Hartley," said Talbot, "give me a fair hearing. Make some allowances for me, when you hear my statement. In a rash moment, I prematurely made the disclosure. I should have paused, and it was my determination to have paused, in order to gain time for taking steps necessary to its fit and seasonable consideration by you and by the world. Allow me to regret, for the present, my intemperate precipitancy. Before our inquiry proceeds farther, afford me the time for preparation, which—but that agitation, of a kind, not I am sure, misunderstood by you, threw me off my guard—I had resolved to afford myself, ere we conversed together on the subject."

While Sir William began to brighten up with anticipated triumph, son thus appealed to, said—

ery strange, Mr. Talbot; may I inquire what are the steps to n, of which you speak?"

"I answer plainly. As yet, I command no real proofs of the charge, and—"

"Ah!" Sir William cried, exultingly.

"And they cannot be procured without exertion, time, and trouble."

"Still very strange, Sir; making all the allowances I can for you, still very strange, I say. But," continued the Baronet, following up his own first view of the matter, "your charge, we must conclude, though incautiously made in the absence of real, circumstantial proof, *has* been made upon the word of some person you believed you could credit?"

"Precisely."

"A trust-worthy person, of course?"

"I fear not. Yet one who, it seems to me, could have had no earthly reason for slandering Sir William Judkin."

"This is still little better, Sir," resumed Sir Thomas;—satisfied, however, with the exact squaring, so far, of the facts of the case with his previous judgment. "Your informant, to warrant even your rash assertion, ought, at least, to have been well-known and well esteemed by you. But, such as he is, you can produce him?"

"I can, at a second's call. But, if you allow me my choice, I had rather decline, how strange soever such conduct may appear, further inquiry into this business, until some certain day, which I am ready to name, and upon which I engage to reappear before Captain Whaley, and stand or fall by the case I shall make out."

"It is not intended to deny you a future opportunity for arranging your full proof, Mr. Talbot. But meantime, having pushed us so far, we must insist, at least, upon being confron ed with the man' from whose assertion yours is, for the present, exclusively derived.'

"*You* push *me*, not *I you*, Sir Thomas. But does the party most interested desire it?"

"I have already called you slanderer and—" his rival began.

"Peace, Sir William!" cried the elder Baronet. "Mr. Talbot, we wait your decision."

"Then, Captain Whaley, be good enough to order in the prisoner who waits in the hall," said Talbot deliberately. Again Sir Thomas saw he had indeed rightly pronounced, in his own mind, upon the excusable, though headlong credulity, of his former friend.

"Oh, the Croppy dog!" cried the magistrate. "What, that fellow! eh?—I guessed it all along. I said it was Croppyism at bottom; didn't I, eh? To be sure, he must appear before us. Haul him in here, Saunders."

"One other question, before he enters," continued Sir Thomas, as the disciplinarian withdrew to obey orders. "When this man made to you, Mr. Talbot, his extraordinary assertion, did you not ask him to give particular circumstances—such as the name, family, and residence of the supposed lady?"

"I did. But, for recent and most important reasons, as he alleged, my informant, pledging himself to be explicit at a future time, declined to answer my questions."

"Then, you know no more from him, nor, indeed, from any other quarter, than we know from you?"

"Nothing more."

The person so generally alluded to, here made his entrance, followed by Saunders Smyly.

Not the least sign of alarm or embarrassment marked his features or manner. The same leer still played round his mouth, and one of his hands was yet thrust into his bosom. To crown his effrontery, his suspicious new hat still hung at one side of his head, and he lounged into the magisterial chamber without attempting to remove it.

"Sarvint, Gintlemen all," he said, seating himself on a chair near the door.

"Off with your hat, you scoundrel!" cried Captain Whaley, darting upon him, and knocking it about the floor. "Aha!" he continued, starting, and staring in some terror at Bill's head—"Be d—d! but I knew I could guess a Croppy: look at the fellows pole." He seized and forced forward the man's head, showing the hair cut short behind; while Bill held quietly for the investigation. When it had ended, and that he again sat upright, the same unaltered, jeering grin was visible on his features.

And here the reader has an explanation of a term applied to the conspirators and insurrectionists of 1798, and used by us in our title page, though not hitherto explained.

The French Republicans, to distinguish themselves "to a hair," we have heard a vile punster say, from the old aristocratic têtes, clubs, queus, and so forth, first introduced the cleanly, though Revolutionary fashion, of *une tête à la Brutus*. Previous to the time of our Tale, it was adopted by (our punster again) the heads of the Irish Republicans. As a mark of brotherhood, it became characterized in the shape of very close-cut polls among their humble adherents, and was detected by the opposite party as a badge of disaffection. Hence "a Croppy," or a man whose hair was sheared close, grew into a synonyme with Rebel.

"Out with every word you know, rascal!" continued Captain Whaley, seizing Nale by the collar, and dragging him to his feet from the chair.

"About what Capt'n?"

"About what! About all this——Croppy business, to be sure! Come—spake!"

"By the livin' farmer, I knows no more about it nor the new-born babe. An' if it's the crop you mane, sure that was done while I was asleep."

"I'll find a way to refresh your memory. Saunders, get the cat ready—put the car in the middle o' the field, and let me see you give this fellow the use of his tongue."

"Why, then, I think I'm purty handy at the tongue, widout Saunders's help. Bud it's an ould fashion wid me to wag it the way I likes myself. Not all the cats, or all the dogs along wid 'em, 'ud make me say as mooch as 'good morrow, Jack,' only jest as is most plasin' to me."

"Quick, Saunders!—What! you Croppy villain!—I'll tache you!—I'll show you!" blustered Captain Whaley, in a foaming passion.

"Hah!" laughed Bill, turning to Sir Thomas Hartley, as Saunders again left the room, "I b'lieve he thinks he's in arnest."

"Captain Whaley," said the Baronet, as the magistrate now strode about the room, "I have business with this man. Allow me to proceed on it, before you deal with him 'on your own account.'"

"Well, Sir Thomas, go on. I'll deal with him, never fear."

"Hah! hah!" still laughed Bill, again sitting down, and stooping his head to enjoy his own jocularity.

"Your name?" demanded Sir Thomas.

"It's me your honour is spakin' to, I b'lieve?" questioned Bill, in his turn; as, sitting at his ease, he bent forward, leaned his e bows on his knees, and, resting the edges of the leaf of his hat upon the tips of the fingers of either hand, slowly swung it backwards and forwards, and seemed much engaged in observing its motions.

"You," resumed Sir Thomas. "I require to know your name"

"Why, then, by the hokey-farmer, it's not so asy to come to that, as your honour thinks. It's not so asy for a body to tell his name when he has such plenty of them. Sometimes they calls me one thing, sometimes another; an' which is which, I lave themselves to say."

"By what name were you baptized?"

"Baptized? Anan?"

"Christened, then?"

"Oh, ay! Why, then, I b'lieve it's one Terry Mahaffy they chrishened me, if I was chrishened at all—an' I'm a'most clane sure that I don't remember whether I was or no."

"What means this fooling, sirrah?"

"Fooling! Faith, then, if your honour was goin' to condemn me for a fool, you'd never get my neck in the noose."

"Why act thus, Bill?" interposed Talbot; "cannot you answer the question directly?"

"An' so I did; an' do you answer it betther, if you know how, Capt'n. I'd be glad to be tould what's the rason of axin' me any questions at all?"

"Send him out to Saunders," prescribed the magisterial umpire, "and you 'ill find him more talkative in a minute or two."

"Maybe some o' ye 'ud say it's too mooch talk I have, afore you've done wid me," said Bill.

"Answer me positively to your name, man," cried Sir Thomas.

"If you don't like the name I tould your honour, I'll give you your pick-an'-choose of five more. But what's the use o' my name? Can't you ax about the thing your honour wants to know?"

"Well, then, Mr. Talbot has given you as his authority, for stating that Sir William Judkin is already a married man. You will tell the name and family of his wife, and where she can be heard of."

"An' Square Capt'n Talbot says, I tould him that his honour, Sir William Judkin, was married?" demanded Nale very deliberately.

"Such is his assertion."

"Why, then, by the livin' farmer, I tould him no sich thing."

"How!" exclaimed the young Baronet.

"Villain!" roared Talbot, losing all his former self command,—"execrable villain! is it thus you betray me?"

"Bother, Capt'n, there's no use in *balourin'* * this way. I won't tell a lie to plase any body—barrin' myself."

"Gracious Heavens, Henry Talbot!" said Sir Thomas, now deficient in his last link of anticipations, "Can this be possible? You have not even the word of this wretch for your assertion? and what are we to say, or think?"

"By the Judge above me!" shouted Talbot, "he utters the veriest falsehood that ever fell from Villain's mouth."

* Making a noise.

"Hah! does your honour hear the poor young Capt'n now?"

"Our inquiry has ended," resumed Sir Thomas;—"ended, so far as concerns you, Sir William, as I expected. But, as concerns you, Mr. Talbot, *not* as I expected. Misguided young man, I pity you."

"Keep your pity for those who seek or require it, Sir Thomas; keep it for yourself. As to yon high-crested braggart, this, indeed, is his day of triumph. But mine will come—will come!" he repeated, raising his voice, and stamping vehemently,—"the day when, for his acts to others, as well as for his words to me, I shall crush him thus!—thus!—beneath my feet!—And, Sir Thomas Hartley, the day will come when you will think of this with horror! No more now. My presence here is not longer necessary. Good-morning, Captain Whaley!" And the baffled rival of Sir William rushed, almost foaming, out of the room.

"Hah!" still laughed Bill; his chuckle coming in, amid the storm of human passion, like that of a malicious fiend.

"Be d ——— d!" remarked Captain Whaley; "for as loyal a man as he is, Talbot has got through this business most shamefully."

"And now, Captain," resumed Sir Thomas, "we have to prefer a more serious charge against this person," pointing to Nale.

"There isn't a thought of his mind I won't know, in a hand's turn," said the Captain,

"Faith, your honour! if that comes to pass, you'll know more than people 'ud think by lookin' at me."

"Sir William Judkin, Sir, was set upon last night by three fellows, who dragged him from his horse, bound him hand and foot, robbed, and threatened to murder him."

"An' so he was," observed Nale; "an' I tell you he had a great escape. 'Twas ten chances to one between a grave an' a feather-bed for him last night."

Sir Thomas stared at the fellow, who thus seemed preparing to admit the coming accusation against him.

"Sir William himself has not spoken to the identity of any of the parties—"

"Not yet," interrupted Sir William, "but hear me now. This morning I had not a notion on the subject. But, since we have been introduced to the person before us, impressions made upon me at the moment of the outrage, and since forgotten, are called up by his appearance, voice, and manner. At present, I am morally assured he was one of the would-be assassins."

"Why, then, I was only wondherin' what kept your honour's memory back so long," said Nale. Perhaps, recollecting all that has passed, the readers will join in Bill's astonishment.

"I came up by accident, Captain Whaley," said Mr. Rourke, "just in time to give help. Two of the ruffians attacked me, and one of them is, I believe, now before me."

"Hah!" put in Bill, "only for your reverence, and your good four bones, it's a thruth that the clay o' Dunbrody 'ud now be stoppin' his breath."

"Villain!" cried Sir William, "you make the very same horrible allusion which you made when I was bound at your feet."

"Does your honour think so?"

"We have other proof, Sir," continued Sir Thomas. "A hat was picked up on the spot, by Mr. Rourke, which we can identify as his."

"Ay; ay! Every thing coming home against the Croppy-dog," said the magistrate. "We'll commit him for trial, after I've settled my own account with him;—that is, if I do not pay him in full for all accounts. Ay, and be d—d! But here comes Saunders to tell me the car is ready"

"Well," answered Nale, "sure there's enough about it, up an' down. See here; I don't care an ould fig for the whole o' ye;" suddenly starting up, and changing his manner from the sneering buffoon to the daring bravo,—"I'll tell you the long an' the short of it, Capt'n," speaking aside. "They have no proof I was at the nate caption of that bould blood there; it's all nothin' but guess. Whether I was or no, the Duoul send 'em knowledge. I want to be goin' about my business—but I'll spake to you afore I go."

He suddenly darted to the door, and was in the hall in an instant. Captain Whaley pursued him close. But it was not Bill's intention to attempt an escape. He saw that such a measure was impracticable. Our astonished party, thus left alone in the magisterial chamber, expected to hear a scuffle abroad. No such thing occurred. Sir Thomas Hartley stepped into the hall. The Captain and Bill, he was informed, had quietly retired into another room, whither we will introduce the reader to witness part of the mystery that went forward.

"Well, 'tis read through an' through, your honour?" asked Nale, alluding to a paper the Captain held in his hands.

"Yes, ay; be d—d! you are a useful man, I see. Have you done much since you came to this part o' the counthry?"

"A little. Tell me, Capt'n, what's the rason you'd be listenin'

to stories from sich as are widin' there? We all know what the big priest is made of. But, did it never cross your mind, that Sir Thomas an' his son-in-law that's to be, knew a little o' the sacrets o' the time?"

"The old Croppy I've long suspected. Of Sir William not much is whispered."

"An' yet there's one or two that thinks he'd have no objections to mount 'the green,' if he saw things turning up for it. Th' ould grandfather didn't lave him many o' the acres clear o' charges, in one sort or another; an' a day like the day that's comin', might pay all debts an' bonds, or gain him some new acres that 'ud have nothin' to pay."

"Right, by ——! I'll keep an eye on him."

"There isn't another Capt'n in Waxford County I'd budge to. But I'll put it in *your* way to do more than the whole o' them together. Not a Croppy, next or near, but I'll scent out for you. What does your honour think of comin' this blessed night, right a-head upon a barrell-bag full o' pikes?"

"Where, eh? be d—d! a fine thing—a fine thing for the Ballybreehoone Cavalry—eh? Where are they to be found?"

"I'll be back to you afther night-fall wid the whole story. Now I must go look at 'em agin, to see if they're safe, as I left 'em."

"I'll reward you handsomely"—

"Well; we b'lieve Masther Saundhers may keep his cat an' her kittens for them that wants 'em, now. Capt'n, the first job to be done, the moment I lave you, is to see some o' the boys, an' give 'em a little thrate. An', by the livin' farmer! I haven't as mooch as 'ud pay for a thimble-full."

"Here is a guinea—earnest, only, of your fair reward, when you merit it. How soon do we meet again?"

"About the dusk, I tould your honour," answered Bill, buttoning up his guinea. "I moost always come in the dark, an' by the back way, too—the same way your honour 'ill let me out now, for rasons plain to be seen."

"Yes—follow me."

And accordingly Captain Whaley led his new ally to the back entrance of the house.

Our friends were not without suspicions of the nature of the private conference between him and the wretch Nale; and therefore did not feel any extreme astonishment when, in a few moments, the captain reappeared before them, saying, in his most magisterial

and decided tone and manner; "I do not think it necessary, Sir Thomas, to follow up this obscure business any farther."

"Indeed? may I ask your reasons, Captain?"

"Reasons I have. Good ones, too."

"Has not the man been charged with murder?"

"Without proof."

"Did he not almost confess his guilt?"

"I do not think so."

"And your reason for allowing him to escape us, is, because you do not think so?"

"That, and other private ones, not to be questioned, Sir Thomas. I will attend no farther to the case."

"Is this justice?" demanded Father Rourke; "to screen a murderer, because he turns informer?"

"Priest Rourke, you'll have enough to do to look to yourself. Be d——d, Sir! I told you as much before."

Oh, good morning to your Captainship!" And the priest strode out of the room.

"Such conduct I cannot regard but as disgraceful," resumed Sir Thomas.

"And *you* may as well take care o' your own conduct, Mr. Baronet Hartley."

"What! no redress for me against a common assassin?" asked Sir William.

And I'd advise you, too, my young grandee, to have a care o' yourself."

"In my estimation, as well as Sir Thomas's, you stand disgraced, Sir."

"Little caring how I stand in the estimation of either o' you." And so terminated the interview.

Upon this day, as well as the former, Sir William dined at Hartley Court; but not *tete-à-tete* with its master. Sweet is food to him that hungers; drink to him that thirsts; rest to him that is weary; "pleasure after pain;" safety after danger; sunshine after storm. But sweeter than any of these, or all of them together, is the reconciliation of young and ardent lovers when doubt yields to confidence; when the terror of eternal separation is replaced by the hope of eternal union. And this most delicious of earthly enjoyments did the young Baronet now experience. Again, a hand softly rested in his, which he had feared was estranged from him for ever. Again, he pressed his lips to a cheek which he had

feared to see flame against him in indignation, but which now revenged with love's own blush alone that tolerated freedom. Again, eyes met his in smiles and sparkling, which during the separation and doubts of only a few hours, sickening fancy had begun to glaze with coldness and aversion; harmonious cadences again tingled in his ears, which he had thought never to have heard more. The delicious evening long, he sat, enjoying the reflux of such a tide of happiness, as, fully to the observation of Sir Thomas, and to the sympathy of Miss Alicia, left him incapable of little else than surrendering himself to its influence.

CHAPTER XXVI.

We have intimated that the mysterious abode of Poll Beehan and her son Davy stood on the declivity of a hill which overlooked the village lying nearest to Hartley Court. This village was one of the poorest class, chiefly consisting of the miserable hovels in which the labouring poor of Ireland drag on their lives of privation. Altogether, the number of dwellings did not exceed twenty. But, as in all society, no matter how small, there is a gradation; so, even our humble hamlet had its more fashionable ("dacent") quarter.

A few houses of some appearance of comfort, and grouped together, claimed precedence over the straggling huts of the poorer order. Peter Rooney's mansion was among them; having a four-paned sash-window at either side of the door, besides another in the gable to light his workshop; exhibiting the thatch at top tastefully mitred, and otherwise ornamented; and flaming in an annual coat of yellow-wash, with around the windows edges of white.

But that abode over which Shawn-a-Gow presided, ranked first as to extent. It stood contiguous to the cross-roads, was of long existence, and, although the hamlet could not afford to the compound establishment the means of becoming wealthy, in the true sense of the word, still Shawn had a large share of custom, both as a smith and a vendor of strong liquors. Of two or three humble taverns, such as that in which Bill Nale had lately been found, none ever called themselves the rivals of the Gow's. A public-house, putting in strong claims, stood indeed at the other

end of the hamlet; but its straw-stuffed casements, and a few broken-necked decanters, connected to the fragments of the glass of the window, by cobwebs of long-standing, visibly indicated that the liquor to be found under its roof, was not deemed of equal flavour with that sold by Mrs. Delouchery.

The proprietor of this rival establishment was a young widow, not yet five-and-twenty, whose brow of pallid hopelessness told her despair of success in her unpromising attempt for a livelihood. Between her looks, and the device of her faded signboard, there might appear some analogy. Two curiously-shaped birds stood tip-toe thereon, at either side of a sheaf of wheat, each holding in his beak an ear of the corn, properly bent down by the artist for the birds' accommodation. The poor landlady appeared to have as little prospect of realizing her hopes of fortune, as the pigeons, crows, or whatever they were, of swallowing the grain thus held between their bills the year round.

Circumstances have changed, however. That very widow now stands a plump consequential personage, (no longer widow, by the way,) at the door of a well-supplied and well frequented country ale-house; occasionally observing to her customers, in reference to the rebellion of 1798, that it certainly was a fearful time, yet, that "'tis an ill wind that blows nobody luck." Her brow of despondency has changed into one of self-content, and some importance. Iron-bars protect her house from thieves. Its interior bespeaks cheery comfort: in fact, it is the head hotel of the little village. While, of Shawn-a-Gow's mansion, not one stone stands upon another, and of Shawn-a-Gow himself there is only a recollection.

It was night, and contrary to the law which prohibited persons from leaving their dwellings after night-fall, Peter Rooney, and two neighbouring small farmers, sat, with the proprietor, in Shawn-a-Gow's tap-room. They knew, that if detected in their stolen conference, they incurred the penalty of transportation; yet men will, at all hazards, indulge their inclination for the interchange of opinion upon subjects of common interest. They also recollected the hideous catalogue of punishments which hung over them for having become connected with the conspiracy of the day: their manner was consequently constrained and cautious, and their discourse pursued in that subdued tone which implies danger in the topic.

Peter Rooney was dressed in a more homely suit than that in which he had honoured the meeting of the Upper baronial. It was indeed, diligently held together, on the saving maxim, "a stitch

in time saves nine ;" one always recollected by Peter, in reference to his own attire, though seldom recommended to his customers. But he still mounted his full-bottomed, sleek-crowned, yellow wig; and a clean-plaited stock, ever hung up while he sat at work, gave him an air of much decency. Upon a principle never lost sight of, namely, that of making as much of his person as he did of his understanding, he sat very erect in his chair.

Opposite to him, at the end of a long deal-table, was Shawn-a-Gow, his tangled, black hair, and his black beard of half a week's growth, rendered even blacker by the atoms that, constantly flying from his forge, had nestled in it. He bent forward, and stretched his great brawny arms their full length along the table—a position to him, of absolute rest. The knuckles of his ponderous and dingy fists met together, enclosing a space within which was a two-handled pot of ale, thus formidably guarded. The others were also provided with ample measures of liquor.

"I tell ye, 'tis as thrue as that the wig is on my head, or my head on my shouldhers," said Peter Rooney, continuing a previous discourse. "Peg Kelly, the beggar, came puffin' wid the news, to-day-mornin'; an' I sent the tidin's, hot-foot, an'-never-hould, by John Foley, to the stone pound. I'll go bail there is'nt many in Waxford county but has the news by this time."

"Did they do mooch good?" asked the Gow.

"I tell you," answered Peter, in a whisper, "The Kildare boys was up, for the counthry an' the green, an' aginst the orange, like brave champions. An' the lads o' Carlow county is on the sod, wid the same bould attempt. An' the brave county Wicklow boys, too."

"You tould that afore," said Shawn.

"It was just the mornin' o' yestherday that the Kildare throops came pourin' like the storm o' wind, into Naas town."

"You're talkin' o' King George's soldiers?" again interposed the smith.

"I'm spakin' o' the throops o' the Union, Jack."

"Call em by their right name o' Croppies, an' then we'll undher stand you."

"That's a name put on us for scorn, Jack Delouchery. The right name o' the brave boys is throops o' the Union, or the Irish Army o' Freedom. They came into Naas town, I tell ye, shoutin' like hearties, wid their long pikes afore 'em. The soldiers' bullets flew like hail among 'em, 'an —"

"Did tney bate the soldiers?"

"They fought like haroes o' the ould time, bud were forced to run."

"Well, there's an end o' that story."

"The Kildare boys made slaughther in Claine, an' in the town o' Prosperous they killed their Orange murdherers. Two hundred red-coats they sthretched in the sthreets; an' a hundred Welsh throopers tumbled from their saddles wid Irish holes through their bodies."

A story seldom loses in the carriage; and Peter here exaggerated the number of the slain.

"There's somethin' in that talk," said the smith.

"A regiment o' Dhragoons, horses an' all, was laid prosthrated on the commons o' Kilcullin." Peter went on, still exaggerating; "the county Carlow done their best agin Hacketstown an' Monsthereven; and the Wicklow hearties darted their pikes through the Orange at Sthratford. Ould Ireland is up for liberty. Her thrue sons 'ill have the upper hand o' them that 'ud be her murtherers."

"An' here, in Waxford county, they're waitin' to be murthered, out-an'-out, the moment the news you are tellin' us comes to the Orangemen's ears," said one of the small farmers. Some difference of opinion followed the remark. It was said that utter terror kept the men of Wexford quiet. The farmer reported that, upon the morning of the present day, twenty-five peasants and others had been shot, "in a batch," at a village called Cullen, and that this and the like vigorous measures frightened the people into stupefaction.

The second stranger mentioned that the magistrates of the county had issued a proclamation, promising pardon and safety to all who, by a certain day, should come in with their pikes, and swear allegiance to King and Government. It was his opinion that, if this covenant were kept with the people, the County of Wexford would remain quiet, and ought to remain quiet.

"They only want our pikes to kill us the asier," said Shawn-a-Gow.

"An' its plain to be seen they don't mane to hould to their word wid us," said Peter Rooney. "For, not stoppin' their hands to let us do what they ax of us, by a certain day, sure they're floggin', an' burnin', an' killin,' as busy as if they never sent out that paper."

"An' not a lash less, or a cabin less, or a life less, 'ill be given or spared afther the pikes is taken from us. But the conthrary-wise," resumed Jack.

"But who's to give the word?" asked one of the farmers.

"There wouldn't be them wantin' that 'ud know what they'd be about," said little Peter, smoothing down his wig, and looking as like a commander as he could.

"Phoo; I see it's a botched job," rejoined Shawn. "Divil a head or tail it has; that's plain to be seen."

"No one ever had thrue rason to throw the word botch on me, Jack Delouchery," answered Peter, now dragging down his wig, as he took to himself the reproach cast upon the manager of this ill-contrived plot. We speak with reference to the County of Wexford.

"There's botchin' in more ways than one in it, too," resumed the Gow, not heeding him. "Ye have informers and spies among ye, I tell ye. What other way could that murtherin Whaley come sthraight upon them that's concarned, as well as them that's not concarned, in the business?"

"It's a sore pity, an' a thing to be fretted at, if he doesn't be paid back, for all his doins, in his own coin," observed Peter.

"The Orange bloodhound!" ejaculated Shawn. "'Twould be worth a pitch head-foremost into kingdom-come, to have one good hoult of him in a right place!" His voice sank into its most husky tones, as he strongly clenched his two monstrous black fists, raised them slowly from the table, and then let them gradually descend, until, with the completion of his fancied picture of revenge, they fell heavily and crashingly on the board.

"Bud what's that?" he asked in a quick whisper, as a thundering knock came to the door—"Spake o' the Duoul, and he'll appear!" snatching up the candle, and placing it under the table.

"The Yeomen, Father dear, I'm amost sure!" cried Kitty, running in alarmed; while, as the knocking grew louder and louder, her mother stood staring about her in the kitchen.

"Bridget!" cried Jack in a low voice, of which, however, the tones were so awful to the good dame's ear, that she was at his elbow in an instant—"do you keep 'em talkin', for a start, till we get out, back'ard—Kitty, give the best help you can."

"There came no horsemen to the door, Jack," said Peter Rooney very coolly; "wouldn't it be good sense to wait an' see who's outside?"

"Ax 'em a question, Bridget," ordered Shawn.

"What 'ud ye be plased to want this hour o' the night?" demanded the poor woman, in a tremulous voice.

"Mother, mother! open the door, quick!" she was answered.

"Why, that's Tom, isn't it?" questioned Jack.

"Yes, father, yes—open, open!"

"Stop your hand a minute," interposed Peter Rooney, as the smith strove to undo the door,—"let one that has a well-hearin' ear talk a little to the body abroad."

"Phoo!—stand back, Peter—hasn't a Father a good right to know his boy's voice?" The door was quickly opened, and Jack's son, a lad of eighteen, respectably attired, as his accent and manner were decent, rushed in, pale and out of breath.

"What's this for, Tom?" questioned his father, in a struggle between reprimand and affection, while he held out his hand to his darling offspring. The rather inconvenient pressure experienced by the youth might have told him that, notwithstanding his words and tone, the rough smith was glad to see him.

"Another time, Father, I'll tell you how I heard the news," answered the lad in great alarm—"But now, run, run! Whaley and his Yeomen are at my heels—they spur to seize on you while I am talking!"

"Then, Tom, there's no time for talkin'. Bridget,"—clutching her arm—"clear the chest, if you can. Pether Rooney, run out an' warn the neighbours—quick, quick, man!" Peter obeyed. "Connors, and you, Kavanah, help to rouse 'em out. If a man kind is caught, he'll be flogged—hurry, hurry!" And they, too, left the house.

"Father, you've been making pikes, I hear," said his son to him, aside.

"They're in a hidin'-hole, my boy, undher the anvil-block, that's fa tened in a way no one knows but mysef. Out, you, too, Tom. Stand on the road, beyant the village, an' listen well to hear these murtherers comin'."

The lad accordingly left him. The buzz of hurry and confusion was indistinctly heard in the village. The quick but not loud knock went from door to door. In a few brief and whispered words the inmates learned the approaching danger. Some rushed forth, half attired, only attentive to personal safety; some, in their headlong haste, endeavoured, with muttered threats or intreaty, to force out their families; some snatched at whatever was most valuable in their dwellings; and some, afraid to fly, crept into hiding-places. In a very short space of time, nearly the whole population, except some feeble women, or bed-ridden old men, or fear-stricken children overlooked by their parents, in the bustle and the darkness, were silently and stealthily speeding out of the hamlet. Half-way to their place of refuge, the galloping of horses came on their aching

ears. At the sound the half-clothed mother tried to stifle the cry of her startled infant, which she dared not stop to soothe into quietness: the whispering inquiry after friends not seen by friends amid the throng; and the subdued warning to "stale asy, stale asy," were the only accents of communication interchanged between the fugitives.

The hill that has been mentioned as rising above the village, ran some distance beyond it: its summit, and the greater portion of the descent, were rocky and barren, only nurturing patches of dwarf furze, and spare grass, that the furze checked as it struggled into growth. At the side turned from the village, it was clothed, however, with oak and ash-trees; which inserting their fibrous roots between rocky clefts, drew from the meagre soil a sustenance scarce to be expected. A little streamlet, fringed with green turf, flowed by the foot of this declivity: a lesser hill, more recently but more thickly planted, also arose from its edge. So that here was a secluded little glen, shut out at every side from observation. Hither came the inhabitants of the village, to crouch beneath the concealing foliage, in the panting silence of fear, until their dreaded enemies should have passed away.

The frightened hare, when she has gained some distance from her pursuers, will pause, sit up, and lift her ears in the direction whence she apprehends danger. And so, after a pause of consternation, the closely-couched people began to question each other, and to start opinions or conjectures in more audible tones. Inquiries ran through them, as to the presence of members of their separate families; and low wailings, interrupted by sudden calls to attention, arose within the little shadowed solitude, as the mother missed her child, or the daughter her parent. But the nearer and nearer noise of the galoping horsemen, distinct through the hush of slumbering Nature, soon silenced every breath. In the pause of fearful anticipation, every bosom became self-occupied.

Shawn-a-Gow, clutching his son by the arm, had led on the body of fugitives. Arrived at the turfy margin of the silent and almost invisible streamlet, he caused him to sit down. Then commanding him not to stir till he should return, the smith, accompanied by the intrepid little Peter Rooney, ascended the wooded hill, gained the summit which overlooked the village, descended a little on the other side, and there lying flat among a clump of furze, both cast down their looks to note the proceedings of the invading yeomen.

No moon hung in the heavens; yet, though it was now the noon

of a summer night, darkness, such as swathes the moonless nights of winter, did not reign around or below. Objects continued vaguely visible in the hamlet, and to eyes long familiar with their shape, place, and other identifying features, could not be confounded with each other.

The watchers on the hill heard the thronging tramp of the horses' feet on the road to the right, past the hamlet. With increasing clamour they heard them enter the straggling street, if so it might be called, and drive along that quarter where the poorer cabins were situated. As they passed beneath, the swinging of the iron scabbards against the stirrups was loudly audible, and their closely-formed array, just a mass of shade deeper than that which surrounded it became vaguely visible.

They proceeded towards the more respectable houses. Shawn-a-Gow raised his head above its screen of furze, and, with a muttered curse, saw them draw up, in obedience to the word "Halt!" before his own dwelling. There was a loud jingling of their arms and accoutrements as the men jumped from their saddles: then a score voices cried, "Open!" and then he could hear the breaking in of his own door.

He judged that some entered, while the rest repaired to other houses in the village: for, crash after crash, echoed from different points, followed by imprecations and threats of future vengeance, as the enraged party ascertained the flight of the former inmates. But quickly were blended with their high and angry tones the cries of some few who, through fear or accident, had not joined the fugitives, and who were now dragged from their hiding-places, to the upper end of the street, where stood the commander directing the proceedings.

Still much bustle went on before his own house. Lights glanced backward and forward, just touching, with gleaming outlines, the forms of those who bore them. He concluded they were searching and rifling his dwelling; and after some pause, Shawn raised himself higher from his concealment, to ascertain if the feeble wailings of a woman's voice did not mingle with the louder vociferation of the yeomen. But he mistook; or else the tones became fainter, or were lost in the general uproar

"They're at their work," he said to Peter Rooney, in a cadence resembling the growling bellow of the bull, half terrified, half athirst for vengeance, when the tearing dogs have at last obtained the gripe that tames him.

"The night o' the great slaughter is come," answered Peter.

"Whisht! that's Whaley's voice above the rest. They have some o' the poor neighbours cotched."

The words "Tie him up!" were those to which Peter directed Shawn's attention, pronounced by the commander in a loud pitch of voice.

"D'you hear, Shawn? they're dhraggin' the crature along. It's Saundhers Smyly, the ould trooper, that's callin' out 'Croppy rascal.'"

Shawn raised his head again, as he asked, "Isn't that like Bridget's cry among 'em? An' didn't I see her thrudgin' wid the rest o' the women? Blood an' furies, no! now I recollect she went back to get away the last o' the papers."

"They won't do harum upon her," said Peter Rooney.

"*I'll* go back for *her*," cried the smith.

"You'll do no sich thing, Jack Delouchery. Have you a mind to give yourself up into their hands, an' lose us the sthrongest arum an' the bravest heart o' the Waxford throops o' the Union! Lie down, man! lie down, I bid you!" continued Peter, with an energy that was natural to him, and that often had its effect upon his most colossal friends, as Jack half started up. "Down wid your head, an' lie close. Is there no concarn on your mind for us all, if you won't care about yoursef? Wouldn't the sighth o' you, walkin' from this, tell them where to find every mother's soul of us? Maybe it isn't Breedge. Or, supposin' it is, they have no bnsiness wid a woman. An' an ould mother of a woman 'ill get no hurt among 'em, divils as they are, I tell you. So, asy, Shawn, asy; she's only cryin' out becase she's frightened."

"Poor fool of a crature," muttered Shawn, as he obeyed Peter's commands, and again lay flat—"she's yowlin' to think that she'll be a beggar in her ould days. Whisht!"—a second time rising on his knee,—"what's that Whaley is sayin' now?"

"Avoch, Shawn! Light it up, light up, boys! is his word," answered Peter.

"By the Eternal!" said Shawn, at last fully starting to his feet, "my house is a-fire, blazin' up to give the hell-hounds light!"

"The Lord help you! 'Tis blazin', sure enough," said Peter.

The smith kept a brooding and gloomy silence. His almost savage yet steadfast glare fastened upon the element that, not more raging than his own bosom, devoured his dwelling. Fire had been set to the house in many places, within and without. Though at first it crept slowly along the surface of the thatch, or only sent out bursting wreaths of vapour from the interior, or through the

doorway, few minutes elapsed until the whole of the combustible roof was one mass of flame, shooting up into the serene air, in a spire of dazzling brilliancy, mixed with vivid sparks, and relieved against a background of dark-grey smoke.

Sky and earth appeared reddened into common ignition with the blaze. The houses around gleamed hotly: the very stones and rocks on the hill-side seemed portions of fire. Shawn-a-Gow's bare head and herculean shoulders were covered with spreading showers of the ashes of his own roof.

His distended eye fixed too upon the figures of the actors in this scene, now rendered fiercely distinct: their scabbards, their buttons, and their polished black helmets, shone redly in the glow, as, at a command from their Captain, they sent up the hill-side three shouts over the demolition of the Croppy's dwelling. But still, though his breast heaved, and though wreaths of foam edged his lips, Shawn was silent. And little Peter now feared to address a word to him. Other sights and occurrences claimed whatever attention he was able to afford. Rising to a pitch of shrillness that over-mastered the cheers of the yeomen, the cries of a man in bodily agony struck on the ears of the listeners on the hill. Looking hard towards a spot brilliantly illuminated, they saw Saunders Smyly vigorously engaged in one of his tasks as disciplinarian to the Ballybreehooney cavalry. With much ostenation his instrument of torture was flourished round his head, and though at every lash the shrieks of the sufferer came loud, the lashes themselves were scarce less distinct.

A second group challenged the eye. Shawn-a-Gow's house stood alone in the village. A short distance before its door was a lime-tree, with benches contrived all round the trunk, upon which, in summer weather, the gossipers of the villiage used to seat themselves. This tree, standing between our spectators and the blaze, cut darkly against the glowing objects beyond it. Three or four yeomen, their backs turned to the hill, their faces to the burning house, their figures consequently also appearing black, seemed busily occupied in some feat that required the exertion of pulling, with their hands lifted above their heads. Shawn flashed an inquiring glance upon them. Presently a human form, still, like their figures, vague and undefined in blackness, gradually became elevated from the ground beneath the tree, until its head almost touched a projecting branch, and then it remained stationary, suspended from that branch.

Shawn's rage increased to madness at this sight, though he did

not admit it to be immediately connected with his more individual causes for wrath. And now came an event that made a climax for the present to his emotions, and at length caused some expressions of his pent-up feelings. A loud, crackling crash echoed from his house. A volume of flame, taller and more dense than any by which it had been preceded, darted up to the heavens. Then almost darkness fell on the hill-side: a gloomy, red glow alone remained on the objects below: nothing but thick smoke, dotted with sparks, continued to issue from his dwelling. After every thing that could interiorly supply food to the flame had been devoured, it was the roof of his old home that now fell in.

"By the ashes o' my cabin, burnt down before me this night—an' I stanin a houseless beggar on the hill-side, lookin' at it!—while I can get an Orangeman's house to take the blaze, an' a wisp to kindle the blaze up, I'll burn ten houses for that one!"

So asseverating, he recrossed the summit of the hill, and, followed by Peter Rooney, descended into the little valley of refuge. Coming to the spot, by the streamlet's verge, where he had left his son, Shawn cast an inquiring look upon the turf, and then sat down by a reclining figure, which he assured himself was the object of his anxiety. But the smith spoke no word. His head sank to his chest, and he remained in moody thought.

Nearly at the moment he withdrew over the hill, Sir Thomas Hartley came upon the scene Shawn-a-Gow had been regarding. From the windows of his chamber the Baronet had caught the vivid light of the conflagration: even the shouts of the yeomen reached his ears, so still was the lonely night. He ordered his horse, and soon gained the village.

Pushing up to the ruins of the smith's house, he found the yeomen engaged pretty nearly in the same manner as when Shawn had taken his last look of them. One party surrounded a thorn-bush parched by the recent blaze, to the knotted stem of which was tied Saunders Smyly's victim. The ringing shrieks of the sufferer had sunk into hoarse and feeble cries. His strength had become exhausted from the continuance of the punishment; and as at each infliction his face turned over his shoulder to meet that of his torturer, its expression was such as humanity would weep at, and almost such as misbecame a creature wearing the form of man.

Sir Thomas's heart sickened, but his usually mild nature also fired at the view. He quickly descended from his horse, and seizing Smyly by the throat—"Desist, scoundrel!" he cried; "the man can endure no more."

"Ballybreehcone cavalry! dhraw swords!" exclaimed Saunders, startled at the suddenness and energy of the assault; for, in truth, he was a very coward. His orders were obeyed, and Sir Thomas was rudely pushed away.

"Your Captain," he demanded, "where is he?" as the victim, gaining a moment's relief, turned a mournfully imploring eye upon the Baronet, with, "Oh, Sir Thomas, save me, save me! An' bid 'em to bring me one little dhrop o' wather—the dhrooth is choakin' me!"

Sir Thomas's question was but rudely answered. The men pointed, however, to the group around the lime-tree, and thither he rushed to seek Captain Whaley.

But here a scene of surpassing horror awaited him. As he approached the tree, the figure which Shawn-a-Gow had seen slowly elevated, was for the second time let down, only half deprived of life, that Captain Whaley might, if possible, wring from the convulsed lips and bewildered senses of the victim, confessions regarding a conspiracy with which he had no connexion, and also regarding the place to which his father had recently fled. For the smith, when he returned from the hill, did not sit down by the side of his son.

After having been left alone at the stream in the dell, the boy had looked round to greet his mother. He saw her not. He arose, and went among the groups of villagers, inquiring for her. The trembling people informed him that she had turned back to her house, to secure some important papers. Disobeying, or not remembering his father's commands to await his return without stirring, the affectionate and anxious lad set out, by the way all had come to the glen, in search of his mother. The moment he peared in the village, the yeomen made him prisoner. The reader knows the result.

The parent for whom he had unhesitatingly risked his life, now sat on the ground, near to him, as, at Sir Thomas's approach, he was a second time lowered to attend to the questions of Captain Whaley. Though Shawn-a-Gow had indeed heard shrieks, when her darling was first dragged to the tree, the mother did not now utter a cry or a groan. Her knees were crippled up to her mouth, her arms and clasped hands encircled them, and she gazed around with a vague and unspeculative eye, utterly silent. It was no wonder that her mind, never of a strong cast, should, at the sights she had seen, have quite failed her.

Captain Whaley was engaged in a critical examination of th

lad's spasmed features, in order to ascertain whether or not the vital spark had sufficiently returned to permit of further appeals to the senses and the understanding of his subject.

"He's gone in arnest now, Captain, I believe," said one of the men, while something like alarm tempered the grim smile that accompanied his words.

"No such thing," answered the Captain; "these Croppies have the lives of cats. It takes a long time to kill 'em."

His judgment proved correct. Convulsive heavings agitated the boy's bosom; his limbs quivered to the touch of returning life; a long moan escaped him. When he was placed against the tree, slowly, and with seeming pain, his eyes opened, staring around wildly and haggardly, as if frightful visions met them at every glance.

At this moment Sir Thomas Hartley came up. "Gracious God, Captain Whaley!" he cried, starting back; "is it by such acts as these you hope to bring back the wretched people to a sense of their duty?"

"I require no interference from you, Sir Thomas," answered the Captain doggedly. "Mind your own affairs. I tould you before, they will give you enough to do."

"This is my affair, Sir. It is the affair of every man who claims kindred with humanity, or who sincerely wishes to keep the peasantry of the country obedient to the laws, and faithful to their king. But you, Captain Whaley, you urge them on to ferocious retaliation."

"Be d—d, Sir! do you threaten us?"

"I do not. I merely suggest to you what may be the natural consequences of such scenes, and such acts. And I declare it as my opinion, that the scene and acts which I now behold are sufficient to drive our whole county into insurrection."

"O-ho! you'll call up the whole county against us, will you, Sir Thomas?" Bear that in mind, men. He promises an insurrection through the whole County of Wexford."

As Sir Thomas turned on his heel in disgust, Saunders Smyly ran up to the magistrate-captain, his scourge in his hand.

"Well, Saunders, does the Croppy-hound give tongue at last?"

"He does, plase your honour;" touching the instrument to the peak of his helmet, by way of salute, "but I'll spake in your honour's ear."

"Be d—d! do you tell me so? Aha! I knew there was something in his budget—coming against us, you say, ten thousand

strong? Well, with daylight to help us, I'd scatther 'em like chaff."

"But now to garrison, your honour, till the day comes."

"Ay, Saunders. Ballybreehoone cavalry, prepare to mount."

There was a general rush to their horses.

"Tuck up this young rebel again, however. I'll tache him to keep sacrets."

"Before the Almighty I declare," said the lad, gasping, when they were preparing once more to obey their captain's orders, "I know nothing, nothing, about the Croppy business. Oh, Captain Whaley! you ought to bring to mind that I don't. I have been at school with your son."

The sound of his voice acted upon his mother's shattered mind, as if the angel of intelligence and of mercy had shot through it a reorganizing spark. With a prolonged and piercing scream she sprang up from her crippled position, darted upon her son, caught his head between her hands, gazed wistfully into his features. Then, shrieking once more, till the rocky hill-side opposite rang to the fearful sound, she locked her arm so closely around the boy, that it seemed impossible to loose them, and both fell to the earth.

"Look there, Captain Whaley, and relent;" said Sir Thomas, the tears bursting from him.

"We're ready to march, your honour;" put in Saunders, anxious to be away from the threatened danger.

"I won't stir till this Croppy cur gets what's his due," answered Whaley. "Tear her from him."

"The man that touches her must first cut me down," said Sir Thomas, bestriding the prostrate bodies of the mother and son.

Ruffian hands soon removed him, however, and others clutched the wretched woman. She struggled desperately, and her screams rose more terrifically than before. They were suddenly answered by a furious bellowing shout from the hill.

"Does your honour hear?" questioned Saunders. "They're comin' hot upon us."

"Mount, then," said the Captain, gaining his saddle. He and the Ballybreehoone cavalry were soon beyond the village.

But no insurgent force came upon them. Saunders Smyly's victim in truth had only invented the story of the approach of ten thousand Croppies, in order to escape torture, and divert his torturers from the information he really could give. He had said that he had previously concealed the intelligence in the hopes of rescue and revenge at the hands of his friends, who would certainly surprise the yeomen in the

village; but that even the wish for revenge, could not inspire him with sufficient endurance to wait another moment for their coming.

The sudden shout from the hill seemed, indeed, to countenance his story; but the man himself had not expected it, and, in fact, knew not why it arose. We will explain it.

After sitting down in the little glen, and allowing his head to drop on his breast, Shawn-a-Gow indulged, for a considerable time, his dark and brooding silence. At last he spoke, without looking at the as silent companion at his side.

"Tom! you have no house or home, my boy.—I must give up choolin' you any longer. I'm a beggar myself in my ould days."

"It's not your son Tom is by you," answered one of his neighbours.

"Not Tom is by me? Why, I left him on this very spot, an' tould him to stop for me! Where is he gone to?"—Staring from under his darkly knit brow into the face of the person he addressed, and with a sudden choking in his bosom and throat, the smith half anticipated the tidings he was to receive.

"He tould me he'd go to seek out his mother, an' 'ud be back in a hurry. But it's now a long time since he went."

"How long?"

"Nigh-hand to an hour."

Shawn-a-Gow did not immediately speak again. He arose deliberately, and with some difficulty, from his sitting position. The man saw him slightly stagger as soon as he gained his feet. Then he slowly stretched out his arm from his body, his eyes not attending to its motion, and groped around and above his head, as if for something by which to support himself. A branch of the tree, under the shade of which he had been sitting, met his hand. He seized it, instinctively and desperately: his neighbour, who still reclined on the turf, in contact with the smith's legs, felt the iron muscles quivering, and heard respirations, like the death-rattle, in his throat. While at each convulsion that passed through the father's giant frame, the branch by which he held cracked loud, and the whole tree shook.

"It was Tom I seen hangin' afore the blaze in his own house!" he at last muttered, in broken and woe-stricken accents.—"Ay!"—bursting into a gust of passion—"up it flamed, like the fires of hell, to make a bonfire for his death!"

Seized with some sudden and violent resolve, he now let go the branch and sprang forward, but his limbs failed him. He fell headlong, coming with a heavy sound to the earth, and striking his

forehead against a sharp stone, which, unfelt and unheeded by him, inflicted a wound that bled profusely.

But it was not a puny faintness that caused his fall. It was one that, reacting upon itself, could change into sternest strength and energy. He stood upright again in an instant, now firm on his legs. His neighbour saw him hurry down the little dell. Then the smith came upon a spot where some pikes ready mounted were concealed. He armed himself with one of them, laboured up the hill, almost along the track by which he and Peter Rooney had first ascended, and gained its summit as his wife's last dreadful screams arose over her half-strangled son. His was the savage shout which had answered her, and which, repeated by the echoes of the rocky hill-side, had effectually scared away the Ballybreehoone Cavalry.

Like a baited bull broken loose from his stake, Shawn-a-Gow rushed down to the village, upon the group he yet saw surrounding the lime-tree. The dappled sky began to glow with the first light of morning, only to make more vivid to his rolling eye the blackened ruins of his home, and to prepare for his distinct observation the distorted features of that son, upon whom were concentrated almost the whole of the kindly affections that belonged to his iron nature.

Kitty Delouchery, alarmed for her mother, whose return to the hamlet she had witnessed, gained her side under the lime-tree the moment the yeomen had galloped away. By the gentle persuasion that women only know how to use, she unlocked her mother's arms from her brother's body. Indeed, the poor woman, again relapsed into stupified insanity, had for some time mechanically held her grasp, and yet, with a violence that perhaps may be assigned as the direct cause of the death of him she would have died to save.

As soon as her arms were loosed, she once more sank on the ground, torpid and insane as she had been, before the lad's voice called her into temporary consciousness. Yet her manner and expression were different now. A wretched smile played round her mouth, and she mumbled rapidly and incoherently.

Kitty sat down behind her beloved brother, and while her tears wetted his spasmed and discoloured face, held his drooping head on her lap. Sir Thomas Hartley busied himself in trying to restore the boy to life. He had removed the cord from his fair and well-formed neck, and now stood over him, alternately chafing his temples, and applying his finger to the feeble and irregular pulse that gave no hope to anxiety or exertion. One or two stragglers from the glen stood near.

Upon this group rushed Shawn-a-Gow, pike in hand. The fury

of his mood, assisted by the yet imperfect light, rendered him indiscriminating, and he launched his weapon at the first person upon whom he fixed his eye. By an agile bound, one of his neighbours avoided instant death. The pike, grazing the man's lowered head, struck deep into the trunk of the tree that had been his son's gallows, and even the tug of Shawn's powerful arm could not at once pluck it back again.

Kitty, leaving her brother in Sir Thomas's care, sprang to Shawn-a-Gow, and, while he still strained to redeem his weapon, caught him round the body, and succeeded in persuading him that he was in the presence of friends.

"It's Sir Thomas Hartley, father dear, an' some o' the neighbours. They're come to comfort you."

"Comfort the Duoul! I want no comfort. Where's Whaley's yeomen?"

"All gone, all gone, father."

"Well, another day for 'em! Bring me to your brother's corpse. I want to look at it. An' I'll look at it well an' close, the way I'll be able to tell 'em about it, when we're reckonin' for this night's work together."

"Tom isn't dead, father dear," said Kitty, weeping at the false hope she gave; Sir Thomas Hartley saved him for you."

"Tom isn't dead!—Say that again, Kitty."

"He isn't, Sir! he isn't."

"Then, show him to my eyes. Hurry! hurry!"

"The Lord purtect us, father! There's blood on your own forehead."

"On me?" wiping it roughly from his brows, "blood? blood? what brought it on me? No matther. Do what I bid you!"

She led him a step forward. He snatched up the dying lad The sudden motion caused to glimmer, for a moment, the last spark of expiring life. The limbs quivered; the glassy eyes opened, and fixed in a dull stare; and, drawing a long and heavy sigh, he was a corpse in his father's arms.

The smith gave not one groan, shed not one single tear, winked not once his bloodshot eye to discharge any softening moisture. But as, holding him at a little distance in his arms, he contemplated the discoloured features of his dead boy, the expression of his own blood-stained countenance was fearful and desperate.

Almost all the people of the hamlet had now returned from the little dell: in the expanding light of the morning, they crowded round the lime-tree. After prolonged silence, during which he still

continued to look upon his lost treasure, Shawn-a-Gow at length laid the body on the circular bench, and spoke in the same deep tones which he had used when from the hill-summit he beheld the roof of his cabin fall in.

"In the darkness o' the night I swore to burn for the burnin' done on me. In the light o' the mornin' I swear over again. By the sowl o' that boy—that was as harmless an' as innocent as when he smiled up at me from his mother's breast," Shawn's voice faltered a little—"Him that is now in Heaven, listening to my oath! I'll have blood for his blood—an' *that* in plenty—ay, Tom! in plenty."

"Whisht! whisht!" whispered Bridget Delouchery, recognising the accents of her husband's voice. "Whisht! isn't that Shawn-a-Gow I hear? Och, ay, an' so it is!" She slowly arose, crept timidly to him, and, as he finished speaking, her hand was on his arm.

"Jack," she continued to whisper, with a miserable smile, directing her lips to his ear, "there's a thing you must do. You're a bould, darin' man, an' never cared for fire or wather. They burnt the house on us —; bud there's the poor Tom! I locked him in the chest. Dart in through the blaze, an' pull him out! You'll be swinged; but what matther? I'm swinged myself, or somethin' ails me, an' I don't mind it—see—I don't mind it."

"She's mad," said Shawn, putting her aside, after he had glanced down upon her face. "Poor wake hearted crature of a woman, she's mad, an' where's the wondher? I won't forget that, either, in the reckonin'. D'ye hear me, every sowl," he continued, loudly addressing the throng, as he wrenched his pike from the tree. "Say after me, or rue it!" He grasped his pike aloft, "burnin', killin' an' slaughterin' to the Orangemen! Slaughther an' ruin while there's one o' them left to be piked, or one of us left to pike 'em!—Slaughther an' ruin! Say it!"

Some shouted out his pledge, some deeply muttered it. But few shrank from the direful oath. There were two voices which distinctly rose above the mingled expressions of feeling. Saunders Smyly's victim, now supported by his neighbours, screamed it high. The cheer of Nale, who had led Captain Whaley to the depot of pikes under the anvil, exceeded every cheer around him.

Sir Thomas Hartley had remained mute. So much was he affected by the death of young Delouchery, that he was almost an indifferent spectator of this scene. Until Peter Rooney, making a bow, for which he was distinguished, and which, among his neigh-

bours, gained him superior reputation for "manners," stepped up to the Baronet, and spoke as follows:

"It's a thing put upon us all, I may say, your honour, to stand up, like sons o' : reen Ireland, an' fight for ourselves an' her. Houses they won't lave us to live in;" pointing to the ruins. "Or lives to live any where, guilty or innocent;" crossing his forehead, as he bent his head towards the corse. "It's a long time we were thinkin' o' the comin' o' this night, that's just a-passin' over us. An', whenever it 'ud come, yoursef, Sir Thomas Hartley, the poor man's friend, an' the nath'ral head of the parish, is the gintleman, we always said, would laid out the brave throops o' these parts to death, or a day o' glory, agin the murtherers."

"I must decline any such honour," said Sir Thomas, looking somewhat astonished at the little man.

"You've only too much o' the bashful, Sir Thomas," rejoined Peter, intepreting the Baronet's words to mean that he rejected the commission, only because it was too great an honour. Bud my way o' thinkin' is, that you're o' the sort fit to be a gineral in the army o' Finn-mac-cool, if it was the will o' God we had sich a great haro alive at the presant day, to fight for ould Ireland. I'll soon show your honour my mind on that head." Peter stepped upon the bench under the tree. "Hear, all o' ye, throops o' the Union!" he continued, "there's one to the fore we'll have for a commandher-in-chief, an' no livin'sowl but himsef, when we stand out on the green sod. An' that's Sir Thomas Hartley, of Hartley Coort, Barrowknight."

A general shout followed the announcement. Sir Thomas endeavoured to speak; but the people, acting on Peter Rooney's notion of his bashfulness, continued their deafening applause, and refused him a hearing. While their clamour still went on, they separated and repaired to their cabins, anxious to ascertain what plunder had been committed in their absence. And thus, for the present, he could not effectually pronounce a public negative upon the little tailor's nomination.

Glancing towards the bench under the lime-tree, Sir Thomas's attention became riveted by another interest. The smith, relapsed into deep and stern silence, stood leaning against the trunk, his face turned away from every object. His insane wife still squatted, mumbling, on the ground. Kitty sat at her dead brother's feet, holding her apron to her eyes, and swaying to and fro in unrestrained anguish. Some few neighbours, who had not retired with the rest, approached to remove the body to an adjacent house.

"Stop!" said the smith; "show him here again. It's the last time."

They held the body across their arms, while he gazed on it.

"There, now," he resumed, his eye still dry, but his voice choking. "Take him away, now, an' bury him. It's the women must dig his grave, an' lay him in it the best they can; the men 'ill have other work to do." Turning his back on his ruined dwelling, his wretched wife, his dead son, and his unprotected daughter, Shawn-a-Gow walked out of the hamlet.

Sir Thomas Hartley put a purse of gold into Kitty's hand, and whispering her to reckon on shelter and friendship under his roof, mounted his horse, and rode homeward slowly and mournfully.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The seeming interruption to the espousals of Eliza Hartley and Sir William Judkin, proposed in the serious charge made by his impetuous rival against the young Baronet, did not cause any alteration of the day previously fixed for the ceremony, when that charge had, to the satisfaction of Sir Thomas, been disposed of. Accordingly, upon the very morning subsequent to the scene described in the last chapter, indeed, in the very morning, during which part of it had occurred, all parties concerned arose from their couches, earnest upon preparations for the important event.

Nor did the public state of things operate to postpone the nuptials. On the contrary. Amid the outward clash of human passion; amid the tumult of hideous uproar, and the positive enacting of acts of frightful character; amid the burning of dwellings by their party, the shedding of blood, the mad shout of popular frenzy, and the screams of terrified fugitives,—Sir Thomas Hartley, having once decided to bestow his daughter on Sir William, only felt increased anxiety that she should now be provided with an additional protector. For he had many reasons to fear that the gathering storm would not pass harmlessly over his head.

To a bride-elect, no matter how much in love, it must be a serious consideration to exchange the laughing gaiety of all-fascinating singleness, for the prospect of matronly cares, and for the wife's submissive and dependent state. We cannot therefore aver that

previous to the arrival of Sir William to breakfast, Eliza's thoughts were not a little sobered by such reflections. She could not avoid dwelling upon the recollection that this was her last day of empire: much as she assured herself that the young Baronet loved her, and willing as she felt to commit her future happiness to his care, our heroine more than once started at the misgiving that he might not prove a perfectly amiable master. This was strange, and she chid her heart for admitting the idea. But it seemed still more strange to Eliza, as it will seem to the reader, that her very last meditation on the subject should, if reduced to words, have assumed a shape not unlike the following. "After all,—if Harry Talbot had been as worthy of being loved—that is—if—I mean, in fact, that if Harry Talbot was Sir William Judkin—I really don't know what I mean—only I wish he *was* Sir William Judkin!"

This, to be sure, seems downright nonsense. But, it has often been asked before, as it will often be asked again—who shall understand the workings, wayward as they often appear to be, mysterious as they always are, of that yet-unfathomed mystery, the human heart, more especially of the female heart?

The rich bridal robe lay before Eliza during the occurrence of these thoughts. And Miss Alicia, previous to the entrance of her niece's maid, busied herself in suggesting, with her usual old-fashioned suavity, divers rules for the best mode of demeanour during and after the ceremony. Not a word of her aunt's harangue did Eliza hear:—scarce a glance of her mind strayed to the subject; or if any did, it was only for the purpose of arranging the matter all its own way.

A loud shout, the chorus of a thousand throats, startled her from her reverie, and interrupted Miss Alicia's lecture on matrimony, which, like other lecturers on equally abstruse subjects, the good old lady could only theoretically discuss. At the present juncture, all unusual clamour caused alarm, and the roar of human voices was especially dreaded. The one lady, therefore, almost forgetting that she was so soon to be a bride, the other that there was speedily to be a union of sympathetic hearts in her family, and under her immediate patronage, both hurried down-stairs, trembling, and anxious to ascertain the meaning of the noise.

They found Sir Thomas Hartley leaning from a window in the drawing-room, and earnestly addressing a throng of persons assembled on the lawn before the house. The crowd was chiefly composed of the men not only of Shawn-a-Gow's village, but of the whole neighbourhood, followed by their women, and by their chil-

dren of all ages. They had come to claim from Sir Thomas a promise, understood to have been given on his part a few hours before, at the smith's lime-tree—namely, that he would become their insurrectionary leader.

The Baronet perceived the dangerous situation in which he now stood. It was evident that the persons before him were not to be trifled with, and that, in their moments of excitement and wild self-assertion, respect to rank would guide few of their proceedings. It became a serious question how he should avoid a connexion with them on the one hand, or protect his family and property from them on the other.

A moltey multitude they were. Almost all among them able to wield a weapon, appeared rudely armed: some with rusty guns, some with prongs, bludgeons, or scythes; but the greater number, with the formidable pike. Peter Rooney, having long held in his village the character of "a well-spoken man," had taken a foremost part in public proceedings, so long as strife was only talked of. But now that the furious people resolved on a sanguinary struggle with their opponents, the little man's canonical-looking wig was not able to retain for him that consideration which his diminutive stature destroyed. And though, ridiculously enough, he had sallied forth with the rest, carrying a pike three times his own length, and, true to his natural taste for the adorning of his person, had mounted a broad green sash over his shoulder, and encircled his hat with a green ribbon, yet Peter Rooney was not destined by "the throops o' the Union o' these parts," to take any lead in actual combat. He therefore could not be said to be the present admitted head of the assemblage. The tall grim figure, determinedly and authoritatively resting with one hand on a great pike, in front of the people, and marked in their minds by peculiar strength, peculiar character, and peculiar grievance, for the place he assumed—seemed to be their temporary leader. Yet did Peter, as he stoutly ranged himself at Shawn-a-Gow's side, hold equal place with the smith, in tranquil presumption, at least, of his own fitness to hold it.

The crowd had approached the house, shouting tremendously. Amid the pauses of the denser vociferation, gleeish "halloos" came, in imitative vigour, from the novelty-loving boys in the rear; who, further imitating their fathers or brothers, appeared armed with sticks having nails at the ends, or even long rods mounted with pins,—the weapon of war being in their minds no more than a plaything. Shrill screams from female throats also joined the hoarser cry. But the greater number of women, leading their children by

the hand, or carrying them gypsey-like, on their backs, were silent. They could only listen to the clamour that announced the abandonment, for a life of hardship, endurance, and fearful danger, of their old homes and "counthry-side."

When Sir Thomas Hartley appeared at his drawing-room window, the concourse, pausing a moment in their continuous uproar, gave three distinct cheers, and then stood still and silent, while Peter Rooney stepped forward to a parley.

The little herald made a very "mannerly" salute, lowering his pike, bowing, and half-raising his Sunday hat. Then, while Shawn-a-Gow stood at his side, resting on his weapon, without speaking or moving, he proceeded to deliver one of his usual verbose speeches, which, it is sufficient to mention, invited Sir Thomas Hartley "Barrow-knight," to take the command of the "throops o' the Union" of his own parish, pursuant to a promise, alleged by the speaker to have been given under the lime-tree before the smith's house.

Sir Thomas eagerly proceeded to disabuse the crowd of their error. He assured them, that, even to their present spokesman, he had distinctly stated his resolve to decline the appointment. It was a situation he felt himself unfit for, and his mind was made up to remain neuter during the contest.

The throng at first seemed inclined to adopt, after this reply, the language of intreaty. Unused to assume any but the most humble demeanour in the presence of their superiors, such was their natural impulse.

"Your honour always joined the poor, an' you'll join 'em now." "We'll folly your honour to the world's end!"—"General Hartley is the general we'll have, an' no other!" said many voices. "Hurra for the brave general!" exclaimed another, and again there was a deafening cry.

When he could obtain a second hearing hearing, Sir Thomas more peremptorily rejected the appeal; insisting, rather warmly, against being now, a second time, misunderstood.

Peter Rooney, with much "dacency" of speech, but very obstinately and pertinaciously, insisted, in turn, that, on the former occasion, he had not at all been misunderstood.

"What's the rason you have for skulkin' back, Sir Thomas?" abruptly questioned Shawn-a-Gow.

The Baronet's first impulse was to resent the rudeness of this language. But he recollected the recent provocations to ill-humour experienced by the smith. He had also observed, among the

crowd, movements that caused him to judge that such would not be the safer mode of proceeding.

"I do not skulk, as you choose to call it, John Delouchery. I but act on a long-formed and lately expressed resolution, to take no side in the coming struggle."

"Is it because you think *we* have no cause to turn out for, that you refuse us?—Answer me that, Sir Thomas."

"An' if he thinks so, no one but an Orangeman 'ud think so," said a voice, which Sir Thomas thought he knew.

"I must acknowledge that you have many and great grievances to complain of. But I am sure the mode now resorted to will not redress them."

"You're afeared, Sir Thomas," resumed the same voice; "an' the curse o' Cromwell on all cowards! But ar'n't you afeard of *us?* Ar'n't you afeard we'd dhrag you down from that windee, an' make you march wid us, or die by us?"

"I have never been an enemy to the poor people around me, and I do not now expect to be treated as one."

"All talk," said Shawn-a-Gow; "an' talk won't stop the Orangeman's bullet, or quench the blaze he lights. Them that's not wid us is aginst us. No coward must stay hidin' in his grand home, while they that has no house to cover 'em is on the hill."

During this dialogue, the feeling of the assemblage had evidently changed, from the hope to subdue by intreaty to the impulse to compel by force. Sir Thomas observed, that amid vehement gestures, and whispered comments, some general opinion, palpably not of a nature favourable to him, became disseminated. They turned fiercely to each other, stretched forth their arms, or raised high their clenched fists: some, only stopping now and then to enforce their sentiments, pressed forward, as if to demonstrate superior daring. To the rear he saw a man crouching down, perhaps to escape observation from the house, who incessantly and zealously addressed the crowd around him. From his vicinity came the hostile groups just mentioned. And over all the bustle and clamorous muttering, were heard expressions which fully explained the furious consultation. "He must turn out—they're Orange that houlds back;—pull him down here—to the Duoul wid cowards!" While a hundred voices thus spoke, one louder than the rest cried "The Green for ever, and down wid the Orange!" Which catchword produced a general scream, that seemed to be tacitly taken as an agreement of opinion. As it died away, solemn silence prevailed, and the fierce glances of all were fixed on Sir Thomas Hartley.

"Once more, an' for the last time, Sir Thomas," said Shawn-a-Gow—"will you be one among us, or an enemy agin us?"

"For the last time, then, I answer, I can be neither. I cannot be one amongst you, because I do not approve of your rising. Still less can I be an enemy of the people to whom I always wished to be a friend."

"Smash the dour!" exclaimed one of those who had just posted himself in front of the throng, determined to carry into effect the resolution that had been vaguely though furiously formed. There was a rush forward; and a man, darting his pike through a window, made such a crash that the ladies screamed loudly.

"Stop!" cried Shawn-a-Gow, pushing back this depredator, and, after him, the foremost of his hostile band, while he raised his pike, and spoke in a voice that reached the outskirts of the assemblage. "I'll never stand by an' see harum done to Sir Thomas Hartley. He done his best to save—mine—from—" he could not say 'my son,'—"from the murtherers. It's thrue he says, he ever and always was our friend, an' no poor man can say he thrampled on him. Who, then, 'ill daare to do to him what 'ud be bad enough to do to Whaley? Sir Thomas," he continued, lowering his voice, and speaking up to the window, "let you and your's fear nothing. I'll die before your house, to save you an them. Bud, take warnin'; join us, an' you can do what you like wid us."

Sir Thomas left the window, and was proceeding down stairs—

"For the mercy of Heaven, Sir Thomas!" cried Miss Alicia, clinging to him; "would you connect yourself with these murderers?"

"Father, dear father!" Eliza implored at his other side.

Assuring both ladies that they need not doubt his prudence, and insisting that both should allow him freedom to act as he judged fit, the Baronet escaped to the hall, called for the key of the door, which the alarmed servants had locked; opened it, and suddenly and boldly presented himself to those who threatened him.

His disappearance from the window had produced a pause of incertitude and inquiry: his abrupt and unexpected re-appearance, within a pike's length of the foremost of the throng, startled all. After a moment's thought, the courage and confidence of the act seemed to turn their opinion in his favour. A slight cheer came from the middle of the crowd, and even the daring van of the array pressed back respectfully.

"Attend to me, my good neighbours," he said. There was an instantaneous stillness. "I come before you with perfect reliance

on your good opinion of me, and your friendly wishes for the ladies of my family. They, at least, merit no ill-treatment from the poor man or the poor man's wife, whose cabin they have often tried to cheer when sickness and sorrow came upon them." Many wives and mothers in the rear, here began to attest, in loud and grateful accents, how truly Sir Thomas had spoken. "If," he continued, "no other reason kept me now at home, there is a domestic claim upon me; you all ought to know there is. Would you have me leave your young lady's side, upon this morning? Will you not rather desire me to acquit towards her my last act of duty and love as a father, and drink health and happiness to her in her character of bride and wife? Come!" he went on, in a hearty tone, as servants, obeying his previous orders, appeared with wine, spirits, and refreshments. (and one of the attendants was Kitty Delouchery): "come, neighbours! three old Irish cheers, upon her wedding-day, for the heiress of Hartley Court!"

Three old Irish cheers were given accordingly. And as the cup and the food went round almost every bosom in the throng glowed as affectionately towards the entertainer as the feeling against him had before been strong and determined. Repeated cheers for himself, as well as for "the posy o' the Slaney," continued to break forth: the half-famished and tired women in the rear, gabbled praises and prayers more loudly than before; while their offspring, merely conscious of a change of scene for the better, hurraed with all the force of their young pipes, and in mimic warfare tilted at each other with their mimic pikes, or bestriding them, caracolled and galloped about in all the pride of cavaliers and warriors.

In a short time Sir Thomas saw the whole concourse depart peaceably; only putting up continued shouts for him and his. Perhaps it did not a little promote the ultimate harmony of the scene, that Kitty Delouchery, who had accepted Sir Thomas's offer of protection, assisted as has been said, in distributing the peace-offering. The eyes of many moistened as, checking their own eagerness to partake of the Baronet's cheer, they watched the poor, tearful, trembling girl, offer to her grim and haggard parent the only nourishment he had tasted since the previous night. And ere the stern Gow turned away to stride before the throng, he kissed his child's cheek, and addressed her present protector.

"It was never *my* thought to hurt or harum a dog o' yours, Sir Thomas. Bud by fright, or by fair words, if you could be made to turn to us, it 'ud be betther for us all. God bless you for puttin' —of over the poor colleen's head. The mother of her is gone

stark mad about the country. An' I have nothin' left to do bud to make them that sent her out, pay dear for their work."

The fearful gathering of his brow, which had momentarily relaxed a little, returned in all its fierceness, and he strode heavily forward to lead the multitude on their way.

Scarce had the lawn been cleared of the riotous assemblage, when a carriage drove through the avenue-gate. New palpitations agitated the bosoms of Miss Alicia and her niece, at the discovery that it was occupied by Sir William Judkin, with a young gentleman of his acquaintance, and the Clergyman of the parish. In a few seconds, the ladies, accompanied by bridesmaid and attendants, were closeted from every eye.

In such times of commotion, the marriage might not safely have been celebrated in the church: it was therefore acceded by the clergyman, that he would attend at Hartley Court. For the same reasons, all parties agreed that it should be strictly private.

The bridal breakfast was laid out, the gentlemen had exhausted all the commoplace topics that each tried to propose, and they were more than tired with waiting. But at length, heralded by her aunt, and leaning on her bridesmaid, Eliza entered the apartment.

Did a lady hold our pen, it would be incumbent upon her minutely to describe the attire of the lovely bride. We, however, may plead our sex as exemption from a task which, to own the truth, ignorance of many terms of a lady's wardrobe of that day, rather than disinclination to display our acquirements, interdicts us from attempting. We are only able to inform the reader that, (as some have unfortunately said before us,) our dear heroine was decorated with—or, more gallantly, if not more truly, we should say—that the bride adorned a robe of lustrous white; that her golden hair was twined through less glistening pearls; and that the necklace of the same which curved round her neck, ceased to be fair in its present position. Yet all this union of rich and graceful costume and of loveliness of person was momentarily forgotten by all who gazed upon the soft, dimpling countenance, now pale and disturbed, now more assured, "celestial roseate" with blushes, yet smiling in response to the smiles of lover or father.

Such charming creatures will tremble when they find themselves on the brink of that precipice to which, through paths of flowers, themselves have lured the way. And Eliza Hartley trembled too. Yet it was not the tremor of fear. It was—but, faith! 'tis our better course to state that, in truth, we know not what it was.

To the eyes of her entranced lover it might appear, however

imply an avowal that she was a tender flower, entrusting herself to his fostering, depending upon him for stay, and nurture, through all the storms of future life. And if ever there stood up, to become a husband, a young man, full mantully looking his fitness and devotion to discharge such a task, it was Sir William Judkin. Nay, the smiling heart of Eliza plainly whispered as much, when, in a single glance, her eye took quick survey of her destined lord, as he confronted her in the ripe bloom of masculine beauty, his fine features aglow with the fondest consciousness of the character he must soon assume.

Tender and touching is the solemnity of a marriage ceremony. We have never beheld but one of the fair principals of such a scene whose eye remained uninfected with gentle moisture, and that was a lady of a certain age, who, to do her justice, vainly endeavoured to squeeze out a tear, all the time that the sparkling orb would laugh against her will at the good fortune it at last saw before it. Eliza was far from that period of life when an escape into shackles, without much reference to the individual under whose sway they must be worn, is said to fill the female heart with joy. So soon as the ceremony had ended, tears more than drowned her happy smiles; and when her father took her softly in his arms, profusely did she weep upon his bosom the farewell she had no tongue to utter.

It was a startling sound that caused her to raise her head from its resting-place, and to look around her in pale alarm. There was the furious galloping of horses to the house; the clamour of heavy steps and loud voices in the hall; the bound and clang of armed men upon the stairs. The door of the wedding apartment was rudely flung open, and Captain Talbot, accompanied by a number of his yeomen, burst forward.

He stood for a moment glaring around him, each glance darting fire, his livid lips quivering with passion.

"What means this ruffian violence?" questioned the bridegroom, while Eliza clung to her father, and the rest of the group shrank aside in terror.

"Back! back!" answered Talbot, commandingly. "Keep him back, men! The yeomen accordingly interposed.

"Tell me, Sir," continued the intruder, leading the Clergyman aside to the recess of a window,—"tell me, Sir, are—they—married?"

"They are," he was answered.

He paused. His eyes rolled with frenzy; he shivered with rage. With angry violence of gesture he spread his hands over his face, and ground the iron heels of his boots upon the floor.

There was a dead pause. Sir Thomas Hartley anticipated the object of the intrusion, and calmly awaited the result, his eyes disdainfully bent on Talbot. Eliza still clung to him, and, shaking from head to foot, also watched the strange demeanour of the visitor. Sir William Judkin stood erect, with knitted brow, his eyes following her's. The regards of all were, in fact, fixed on the same object.

It might be half a minute that the mute observation of his conduct continued—a long period, when the lapse of each second of time is told by the ear of appalled suspense. At length Talbot suddenly withdrew the veiling hands from his face: it was pale as death, calm but stern. Glancing slowly round the circle, he spoke with deliberation and clearness.

"Sir Thomas Hartley and Sir William Judkin, I arrest you both as traitors to the King and Constitution!"

A scream, that, from its obvious effect upon him, seemed to dart like an arrow through his brain, followed this announcement. Eliza, yet clinging, with one arm round his neck, to her father, extended the other towards her husband, a beautiful image of youthful anguish grasping her last stay, and invoking her last hope.

"Base and wretched young man!" exclaimed Sir Thomas Hartley; "is it thus you come to take the revenge you have threatened?"

"I am here, because I am ordered here, Sir Thomas," answered Talbot, sternly. "I came but to perform a duty."

"Well, Sir," said the Baronet, in a tone of gloomy foreboding, "whatever may be the fate of my only child; whether she be left fatherless, or widowed and fatherless, both—"

"Father, dear, dear father! what dreadful words are these you speak?" interrupted the terrified girl.

"My poor child!" he answered, tenderly folding her to his bosom: "I say, that whether you are to be fatherless or widowed,—whether or not we outlive this attack made upon us,—I rejoice at your escape from that tiger! Oh! what a fate had been your's, poor lamb, linked to such a savage!"

"What! he would separate us? tear us from one another?—William, come here! come here!"

The bridegroom broke through the opposing yeomen, and gained her side. She flung her arm around him. "Surely, surely," she cried, "there is not that man alive who will drag from me my father and husband?"

"How is this dear and beautiful creature to be disposed of?" questioned Sir William, in low tremulous tones, of the elder Baronet.

"Even leave her to the care of the Almighty!" answered Sir

Thomas. "We must face our fate. The father of the innocent and helpless will not desert her."

"But, Sir Thomas, consider. The present proceeding certainly has reference to her. In our absence, must she not stand exposed to the machinations of yonder villain?"

"True, true, my son. So long as we live to watch over her, Eliza must be at our side, wherever we go. My daughter accompanies her father and her husband," he continued, addressing Talbot; "I suppose there can be no objection to that?"

"It cannot be, Sir Thomas Hartley! You and he are my sole charge. My instructions extend to forbid all intercourse with your friends."

"Now, villain! your drift is perceived," cried Sir William Judkin, with passion.

"I answer no impertinence," said Talbot, haughtily.

"Send Reily hither," resumed Sir Thomas, addressing one of the alarmed servants who crowded to the door of the apartment.

"That man is also my prisoner, and cannot now wait on you, Sir Thomas," said the unflinching Talbot.

"I perceive, indeed, we are every way beset! I can no longer hesitate to recognise the object of this arrest—Violence to my child may even be contemplated in my absence. Hearken, Talbot! Can the man I once knew—or thought I knew, be so sunk in baseness as to contemplate the daughter's dishonour by means of the father's murder?—What! you turn away, and do not answer? You dare not look at me! dare not meet my eye! God help me! I see we have to deal with a fiend."

"Tut, Sir Thomas," he was answered, when the person addressed had succeeded in mastering the strong feeling he had turned aside to disguise. "This is idle catechising. I am here with no such dastard purpose: mine is a distinct and plain duty, that, as I have said, refers to none but you and that man. Your horses are at the door, and I outstay my time."

"Talbot," said Sir Thomas, with bitter emphasis, "I did not think the earth contained such a Devil!"

"Men, move down-stairs with the prisoners," was the sole rejoinder of the stern commander. The frowning soldiers of civil-war advanced to seize on their prey. Eliza had been drooping between her two supporters. She suddenly revived, burst from the arms of her father and her husband, and flung herself at the feet of her former lover. So rapid was her motion, that neither Sir Thomas nor Sir William could interpose to prevent the step.

"Harry Talbot!" she cried, clasping her hands together; as she held them up in supplication, the wedding-ring met his eye; "lowly and humbly I petition for your mercy—Do not tear them from me—pity, pity, Harry Talbot. Forgive me what wrong I have done you! When first I knew you, little did I think that by you—by you my heart was to be crushed and broken! I was then a proud, joyful young creature: I am now very wretched. Harry, be merciful to me!"

Husband and father both sprang to her, and took her by the arms to raise her up.

"Daughter!" cried the latter; "any thing but this. Do not degrade yourself—do not degrade me—do not degrade Sir William Judkin! Rise, my child—we would not accept of safety at this price—the prostration of our Eliza before that despicable Villain!"

"Do not, do not force me up, my father!" struggling to keep herself in a kneeling posture.—"I caught the tear of human pity in his eye—there is mercy yet where it sprang from. It will flow amply, and fall like the shower on the parched bosom of her who always regarded him with—yes, Harry, with true affection. Oh! I shall prevail!—he was not merciless when I knew him."

"You knew him not, my own love," Sir William Judkin said: "knew him not for what he is—a detected slanderer, and a mean, revengeful coward!"

Eliza might have seen in Talbot's eyes the relenting moisture she spoke of, or it might have been her own swimming and glittering looks that deceived her. He certainly was bending down towards her, with a regard very different from the previous expression of his flashing glances, when, at the remark of his rival, he suddenly drew up, turned away, and walked some paces distant.

Again Eliza broke from her detainers, and again was on her knees before him.

"Harry!—earliest friend—look on me, for the last time; prostrate, grovelling to you for mercy!"

"Rise up, madam," he replied, in his former cool, unshaken tone, "your father is right—you should not thus humble yourself. But, oh!" he continued, lowering his voice, and speaking with emotion, "had you attended to my warning, this never could have happened."

Instantly Eliza sprang up, sternly erect. Scorn and aversion could not be more powerfully expressed than by her features and present mien. Her head swayed back; her pencilled brow knit; her hands dashed the plentiful tears away; and her looks fixed upon the terrible man of power, with a sudden vigour which

mastered him. He could stand unmoved the wrathful words and threathening frowns of her father and her husband: but he shrank dismayed before the scornful anger of youthful beauty.

"Ah!" she cried, "abased and despised man!—You *do* avow your motive!—You dare, at the very moment of your aggression on the father and the husband, avow it to the daughter and the wife! Degradation, indeed, it would then be, to ask or take the slightest favour at your hands. We must not stoop to the despised,—ay, Sir, the despised—and the defied too!—for I feel I can defy you!—Father, fear not for me," she added, turning her back upon Talbot, and taking Sir Thomas's hand, who met her with a look of fondness and of pride.

"Fear not for me! Think you I dread any thing that unworthy wretch can attempt against me? Farewell, father! Farewell, husband! Since I cannot accompany you, I will follow you. You will find that the light-hearted Eliza has courage to brave even the worst for those she loves."

Clasped to her father's breast, his tears rained fast upon her young head.

"Sir William," she continued, "confidently reckon on my safety, as I will reckon on yours. We shall crush this viper, and leave him in the dust."

"We attend you, Sir," said Sir Thomas, turning to the spot where Talbot had stood. He was no longer there; and the yeomen intimated that he awaited his prisoners outside the house.

"Some little remnant of shame is left to him," resumed Sir Thomas; "but, Eliza, we must attend him. God be with you! If this be our last meeting on earth, you have the blessing of a parent, to whom, as infant, girl, and woman, you were and are a treasure. Almighty Father," he continued, raising one arm upward, as with the other he still enfolded her—"thou who givest shelter and protection to the orphan, and a roof and a safeguard to innocence, to thy care I commit my darling; a charge worthy of that care, if goodness and purity were ever found worthy. Alicia," turning to where the confounded and trembling old lady sat, "will you not wish me adieu?"

"Brother—I cannot,—I am not able! I have tried to rise from this chair, but I cannot."

"Then, my poor sister, I will go to you." And as Sir William Judkin strained his beautiful bride in a last embrace, the brother and sister also exchanged farewells.

The yeomen became impatient—the parting was over. Eliza

saw her husband and father descend the stairs guarded. From the windows of the bridal apartment, she saw them ride off amid a troop of yoemen cavalry, headed by her former lover. She watched them down the avenue until they disappeared from her straining eyes. Then all her heroic resolutions giving way, with one look at her bridal robe and bridal ornaments, she sank down beside her insensible aunt—a victim decked, indeed, for the sacrifice.

But when restored to her senses by those who came in to attend her, Eliza spent no time in useless wailings or inaction. Proceeding to her dressing room, she laid aside, with what feelings she might, her pearls, her snowy bridal wreath, and her spotless bridal robe, and assumed without delay her ordinary out-of-door attire.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Upon an eminence overlooking the river Slaney stood, at the date of our tale, an ancient castle, built of reddish stone, with flanking round towers at each angle, which, through scanty slit and hoop-hole, admitted light and air to the winding stairs within. This ancient stronghold also commanded a bird's-eye view of the old town of Enniscorthy, lying partly in a hollow, in parts climbing up steep ascents.

In the year 1798, this feudal structure was ruinous, and, however interesting from the recollections or inquiries to which it gave birth, cheerless. Now it is tenanted,—comfortably, if not tastefully repaired: its character of modern appropriation and care, singularly contrasts with its former state of lonely dilapidation, and even with the antique ruggedness that still clothes its walls. Large windows invite into well-furnished apartments, a broader flood of light than once entered through its primitive loop-holes to glance dimly at its tapestried or wainscoted pride, in times when safety was considered in preference to brightness or ventilation.

This, the Castle of Enniscorthy, as it is called, was the district prison upon the day of the arrest of Sir Thomas Hartley and Sir William Judkin. The Court-martial by which the former was tried, held its sitting in the ground apartment or hall of the edifice, gained after entering the low arched doorway.

The reader is aware that the ordinary tribunals of justice were now

suspended, and that, according to the form of military procedure alone, was the crime of disloyalty to King and State investigated and punished. Before such a Court, hastily summoned together, Sir Thomas Hartley, late in the afternoon of the day of his arrest, appeared to take his chance for life or death.

His arbitrary judges assembled under circumstances unfavourable to cool inquiry or scrupulous discussion. But a few miles distant from the place where they sat, the insurgents, in all the fiery impetus that enraged passions can supply, were wreaking vengeance on their enemies, or upon their supposed enemies. Hourly accounts of slaughter and conflagration marking the separate routes of the throngs who hurried to join a main body, or of like outrages committed by that main body itself, reached Ennicorthy from trembling fugitives just escaping alive, and no more, out of the flaming house, or the fatal mêlée. It was also expected that the town would be attacked. In their feelings of mixed abhorrence and fear, little consideration, or even protracted inquiry, could be expected from the Court-martial, by any person standing accused of a connexion with the authors of such appalling acts.

It will, we hope, be recollected, that at a certain review of the troops of the County of Wexford, Sir Thomas Hartley had attended for the purpose of arraigning before the inspecting General, a certain officer of dragoons. When Sir Thomas entered the gloomy hall of the castle of Enniscorthy, the same revengeful eye rested upon his, which that day, after the rebuke of the General, plainly told the Baronet he might expect a requital in kind, if ever it came to the turn of the said officer to afford it him. In fact, this very man sat as President of the military Court: his, glance towards the prisoner, as they confronted each other, derived its expression from a still vivid sense of the humiliation Sir Thomas had caused him to endure, and from the no less substantial sense of injury impressed upon his mind by the recollection that, out of his own pocket, he had been obliged to make good the losses sustained, at his hands and at the hands of his men, amongst the Baronet's tenants.

A few yeomen officers, formerly of the prisoner's acquaintance, stood or sat around. But averted looks, or the cool and formal nod which, while it vouchsafes recognition, proclaims an end to friendship or kindly intercourse, told him he had no friends even in that group. Not a single eye in the hall beamed hope upon him; not a single tongue whispered good wishes or commiseration, as he took his prescribed seat at one end of the rude table round which were seated the informal arbiters of his destiny.

The charges against him were announced. Without counsel to advise, or friend to assist, Sir Thomas prepared his mind for his defence.

The first evidence on the part of the King was Rattling Bill Nale.

This man deposed, that an agent from the directors of the United Irish conspiracy, in Dublin, had visited the neighbourhood of Hartley Court, in the month of February, for the purpose of organizing the present insurrection. That the prisoner had accompanied him to a treasonable assemblage, held in the house of John Delouchery, the smith. Further the witness deposed, that Sir Thomas Hartley had been chosen General by the people of Shawn-a-Gow's village—the same body of insurgents who had just burnt and plundered Captain Whaley's house. And that, on their way to perpetrate the outrage, food and spirits were supplied to them on the lawn in front of Sir Thomas's mansion.

The prisoner spent some time in cross-examining this ruffian.

Did he not know, as all knew, that such agents as he had spoken of, never admitted their agency to any but assured friends? The witness knew it very well. Was he not also aware, that, even to assured friends, such agents did not disclose their names? Yes; *that* the witness had a notion of, too. How then—not having been presented to him as an assured friend—the witness's own admission—could he pretend to call the supposed person an emissary from the directors in Dublin? Or how identify him, when he did not know his name?

The witness coolly produced a paper, which he alleged to have once been in the possession of the individual in question. In instructions addressed to him by name, this document prescribed the route of his inspecting tour through the South of Ireland, and directed his attention to Sir Thomas Hartley, amongst others, as a true friend to Ireland. Construed to mean, beyond dispute, a sworn conspirator and rebel.

How had the paper got into witness's hand? If, indeed, formerly the property of the agent, to whom witness had never been introduced, how *could* it come into his hands?

The witness would tell Sir Thomas, then; because he was in a humour to be civil, when civility "broke no bones betwixt 'em." Didn't he see the agent reading it, when he peeped in at the rebelly meeting in Shawn-a-Gow's private room? And soon after that, when his honour's man was seeing the stranger safe back to Hartley Court, he, witness, was not so unmannerly as not to give them his company on the way. And then when Tim Reily went to lead out

the traveller's horse, and left them standing together, "by the hokey," he, witness, just managed to borrow it out of the agent's pocket. Sir Thomas saw that the fellow had taken his measures and prepared his evidence too well to be shaken from his direct statement. Indeed, so plausibly did the real facts he swore to furnish conclusions of the guilt attributed to the prisoner, that it seemed useless to combat farther with Nale. The Baronet's only hope was, that he might invalidate his testimony by exhibiting his profligate character to those whose duty it was to balance one against the other.

In this view, he demanded of the witness what was his occupation in life?

"Och, then, by the livin' farmer," that would be making his catechist as wise as himself. Still, witness would give a sketch of it. "He just carried on the war by hook or by crook; and, faith, often got his daily bread, ay, and his butter, too, as the fool said, when many a better fellow, maybe, couldn't pick up a crumb."

Sir Thomas pressed his question. By what means did the witness get his livelihood at present?

Sure, that was easy to be told. As Sir Thomas seemed curious to know, witness would tell him the fun of it. Though, considering how Sir Thomas just now stood, one would think he need not be at the trouble of asking. However, in a spirit of pure civility, witness vouchsafed to say that his present means of existence were derived from giving information, to good loyal gentlemen of the King, against Rebels and Papists.

Had witness ever assisted to make any of those rebels, against whom he so informed?

Now, that was a cranky question, and one that witness would not like "the boys" should hear him answer, or be told that he had answered. But he had so much confidence in Sir Thomas's honour, (the rascal meant that he was sure of the fate which awaited him,) that, still in a polite spirit, he would admit he *had* made "plenty of 'em."

Sir Thomas, after pointing out to the Court the danger of crediting the oath of a person so infamous, said he had done with the witness. Rattling Bill Nale was conveyed out of the castle as stealthily as he had been spirited into it, and soon took his route to incite to the perpetration of crimes, which, without his agency, might not have been committed, some of those he had himself initiated.

The next witness was Captain Whaley. This military magistrate deposed, that Sir Thomas Hartley had been in company at his,

Captain Whaley's house, with Priest Rourke, now one of the rebel leaders. That the very night before the present day, he had interfered to prevent the punishment Captain Whaley was inflicting on known rebels. That he had threatened him, at the same time, with the rebellion which almost immediately after broke out, and one of the first atrocities of which was the burning and pillaging of witness's own house. And witness entertained no doubt that the refreshments distributed to the rebels, on Sir Thomas Hartley's lawn, *were* distributed for the purpose of encouraging them to that very outrage.

In his cross-examination by the prisoner, Captain Whaley admitted that the story of Sir Thomas's alleged connexion with the destroyers of his property, was built upon Nale's report. Sir Thomas pressed him as to his having mistaken the meaning of the words which, according to the witness, threatened all loyal men with a rising out through the whole County of Wexford. But Captain Whaley was quite sure he could not have mistaken so plain a matter.

One of the inhabitants of the village was next brought forward. He deposed to the nomination and election of the prisoner to a command over the rebels of the army. He farther stated, that he had been among the throng at Hartley Court; that he had partaken of the food and whiskey sent out; and that all had understood that Sir Thomas gave a promise to follow the people, and assume his station over them, as soon as his daughter's marriage should be concluded.

Peter Rooney, with all his boasted superiority of intellect, was a simple little man. He had been entrapped by Nale. He could corroborate that witness's testimony as to the fact of a military meeting having been held at Shawn-a-Gow's, the evening that the Dublin agent attended. He could also depose that that individual had returned from Shawn-a-Gow's, to Hartley Court, escorted by Tim Reily. All this and more he could depose, and he was placed on the table in hopes that he would do so. But Peter's simplicity was not more remarkable than his sense of honour. The Court could not get him to answer a single question. They threatened him with instant death, and he showed that strong though unostentatious courage also formed an element of his character. "Well, good gintlemen," he said, "a man can die bud the onct. Gi' me the priest, for half an' hour, or the likes o' that, an' I'll be prayin' for them that kills me. Bud, if ye won't, the Lord have mercy on my poor sinful sowl:" Forthwith Peter Rooney engaged in his devotions with all the fervour of a man preparing for his mortal exit.

The threat of immediate execution changed into a more provident though not more merciful sentence. A triangle, one of the necessary adjuncts of a court-martial in Ireland at the time of our story, had been constructed in the court-yard of the castle. To this Peter Rooney was tied: the diminutive but resolute being, with what would have been called heroism in another cause, and certainly with unflinching constancy of heart, bore hundreds of lashes, inflicted by muscular arms, until, from mere loss of blood he repeatedly fainted. Nothing would he confess: to every question he was silent: the only words which escaped his lips were,* "It's all nothin' to the sufferin's of Him that died to save us."

When, for the third time, he recovered his senses, he was standing in the presence of the Court-martial, supported on either side by two yeomen. His head, divested of its ornamental covering, was bald; his face pale and piteous; and the glance he sent round was one of stupor. Again they questioned him as to his knowledge of Sir Thomas Hartley's connexion with the insurgents. He made an effort to speak, but the words died on his lips, and his head dropped on his chest. Some liquor was administered, not in pity or mercy, but that he might regain sufficient strength and sense to enunciate the words which it was expected would at last convey the information demanded of him. Peter accordingly recovered, and, after many repetitions of the question, was brought to comprehend its import. Slowly turning his half closed eyes, until they fixed on Sir Thomas Hartley, "I'll have no man's blood upon me," he said, or rather whispered, "I'll die in peace. God forgive me my sins!"

In anger responsive to the angry signals of the President, his tall supporters dragged the little man away, again tied him up, and then flung him, without medical attendance of any kind into prison, whence he was liberated the following day by the triumphant insurgents.

Sir Thomas Hartley was doomed to witness another instance of courageous resistance to the commands of the Court-martial, which even more nearly appealed to his heart. Tim Reily was placed on the table, and asked if he had not accompanied his master to John Delouchery's house upon a certain evening? True to the prominent feature of his character, he first answered evasively, in a strain of pleasantry, only more bitter and subdued than his usual manner, in hatred of his catechists, and consciousness of that terrible power

* A Fact.

they could exercise over him. Provoked into ominous indignation, the President said—"Hearken, fellow. You saw the man who stood here before you. As he has been dealt with, you shall be dealt with, if for a moment longer you palter with this Court."

"Ay?" questioned Tim, still in a tone of irony. Then, suddenly he changed his accents and his manner into what, in a person of more consideration, might be called dignity. "And will your grand honours, all round about, tell me this. Did ye bring me here, thinkin' to get me to say one word that 'ud hurt my masther? Och, an' ye never made a worse guess. Lash away, hang away! Bud," Tim continued, turning a tearful and devoted look upon Sir Thomas, "if the boy that ate your bread, and dhrank your dhrink, an' slept undher one roof wid you, masther, sence the day his ould Father left him starvin' an' naked—if he ever open his lips to do a hair o' your head hurt or harum, may the horned Duoul have him body an' sowl, for a rascal an' a thrator! Amin, I pray God."

"Thank you, my poor fellow," said Sir Thomas, instinctively offering his hand, which Tim, bounding off the table, threw himself on his knees to accept and kiss, "I thank you for your love, but do not injure yourself on my account."

"Injure myself, masther! Och, an' this the greatest day of Tim's life. Yer honours," he resumed, again standing before the judges, and speaking more composedly than ever he had done, "yer honours hard what I said, I believe. I mane no offence; bud that's all I have to say to yer honours."

Tim was forced off to the triangle. On the way, his guards buffeted and struck him with their weapons, but he staggered under the blows without complaining.

Sir Thomas Hartley had learned, from the rude conversation and abuse of those who first took charge of him, the prominent accusations for which he ought to be prepared, and had found means to dispatch, before his trial, emissaries to summon some witnesses in his favour. He wished to show that his conduct to the crowd at Hartley Court was an act of self-preservation. His upper servants came to the gate of Enniscorthy Castle to depose to this effect. But there, Captain Talbot was officer of the guard. As if his vengeance could only be satiated by the absolute shedding of innocent blood—he caused those persons to be pushed away, and so left his former friend no materials for a defence, save his own protestations, and his appeal to the Court. Sir Thomas was listened to without interruption. His judges consulted together for a few minutes after he sat down. There was more than party spirit in the eye

of the President, when he arose to pass sentence of immediate death, with however—marking it as a favour—the attendance of a clergyman. Accordingly, the same clergyman who that morning had performed the marriage ceremony at Hartley Court, attended the condemned culprit.

It has been said that an attack upon Enniscorthy town, by the insurgents, was expected to take place before morning. Therefore all loyal men deemed it particularly expedient that Sir Thomas should die at an early period of the night, lest he might be rescued, and prove an efficient and formidable leader.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The night fell, and, as if to sympathize with the coming scene, fell darkly. No moon was in the sky; unusually for the time of year, black masses of clouds rolled overhead.

In the court of Enniscorthy Castle a gallows now confronted its younger brother, the triangle. At a short distance from the more fatal though not less terrible apparatus, the yeomen who had lately guarded it, stood in a group, their eyes turned to the spot where a single taper, held by their commander, Captain Talbot, gave feeble and imperfect light to direct the proceedings of two men who bore a dead body, just taken down from the place of execution.

"He was a good ould Protestan' gentleman, afther all, an' his hand never aginst the poor. He'll be missed in the County of Waxford, when these times are over," said one of the hitherto mute spectators.

"By this soord," said another, "I didn't like the business this morning. Did you see the poor daughter? Her screeches went to my heart."

"They say her new husband 'ill folly his father-in-law."

"And why not?" asked a gruff voice. "Them that purtends to be Protestants, to go and join with the bloody Romans! I'd sthring up all such, the same day I'd let a Roman live—Why not, I say?"

"Why not?" echoed another voice, though not of their group.

"Who spoke?" they asked each other. But none could tell, for no one except themselves now appeared within view. After a pause they resumed their conversation.

"For all that," said the yeoman who had first spoken, "if I was in young Capt'n Talbot's coat, I wouldn't be the man to stand foremost against Sir Thomas Hartley. Many a time he broke bread and dhrank healths wid him he watched this night till he saw him dead, dead."

"Dead, dead," repeated the same voice which had before somewhat startled the yeomen.

The startled group looked fearfully around, and then into each others' faces. The last words sounded as if a screech-owl from the castle turret had syllabled them.

"Could it be?"—began the most superstitious of the men, about to utter a fearful thought—"Whisht!" cried the gruff soldier, "listen, it may come again."

There are moments when supernatural fear will overpower the strongest minds. In the present instance, under the concealing gloom of night, life had just been forced from a human being, who a moment before breathed an inhabitant of earth. The man might for an instant conjecture that the screaming words thus addressed to witnesses of the deed, upon the spot where it had been done, were uttered by the troubled spirit, as it flitted from its mortal tenement.

"It *will* come again," the gruff yeoman was answered. "I spoke the words that make ye tremble, cowards as ye are." They now saw a female figure advancing to them from behind one of the towers of the old building.

"Ye have done a murder," continued the woman, confronting them,—"a murder ye shall answer for, while there's a pike over a Croppy's shoulder. They're going to bury the body. But bury it deep as they can dig, 'twill rise in judgment against the murderers."

"This is your ghost, Dan," said the gruff yeoman. "Seize the Croppy jade!"

"Seize her, seize her—Ay, this is your word to every one, now-a-days," she replied, stepping backward and forward by turns.

"Be off, or I'll cut you down!"

"Don't waste your valour upon me. You will want it all shortly"—and she began to sing at a ringing pitch, a verse of one of the insurgent songs—

"Vive la, the black potatoes,
Vive la, the white ones, too,
Vive la, the French are comin',—
What will these poor yeomen do?"

"Don't keep gapin' so, Dan," said the gruff fellow, as he laid hands on her. "Come along, you baggage. I'll put you where you must alter your tune."

She struggled—to close observers it might have seemed only with a show of struggling. The door of the castle was opened to the summons of her captor, and with heavy curses he pushed her in.

"By the great Saizor, you sthrappado, you, if there's more o' your jaw I'll disciple you, so I will," quoth Saunders Smyly, who received her in the ruined hall. As Captain Whaley's deputy, he had the government of the prison; and he strided about, rattling his keys, with all the consequence of a military gaoler.

"What threat do you dare to make?" she demanded, suddenly advancing upon the vapouring Bobadil.

"I say!" he roared out, much startled by the expression of her countenance, which looked alarmingly fierce in the dim light afforded by a single sconce that hung against the rough wall. "I say! by the left thigh o' Pharoh's horse"—

"And *I* say, by the right thigh o' Pharaoh's horse," pursuing him as he retreated, "that I'll roll your head at my feet, you Harry-long-legs." And snatching at his sword, she drew it from the scabbard, and flourished it close to his ears.

"Comrade!" cried the still retreating cavalier, addressing the sentinel who guarded the door—"charge her in the rear! Nations, honest woman, what are you at? asy, asy, I bid you!" as she forced him against the wall.—"Comrade! cut her down! she'll gash me, by the great Saizor."

Hah, hah!" laughed his armed comrade—"by the gun in my hand, the woman is batin' him. Why don't you give her some o' the back-slaps, an' front-cuts, you'd be curry-whibblin' round our heads, Saundhers? Now's the time to show us the good o' them."

"Answer me what I shall ask of you," said the conquering heroine, while Smyly cringed against the wall. She spoke in a tone of voice that could not be heard by the sentinel.

"Away wid yoursef, an' I will."

"In what part of the castle is Sir William Judkin confined?"

"He's in the far tower."

"Are you certain of that?"

"I'd gi' you my oath I locked him in there awhile agone, wid this kay."

"Then, there's your sword again, you boasting coward!"

"An' now, you sthrappado," grinned the trooper, waxing valiant again, "what talk had you? I'll"—

"Will you?" quickly drawing a large pistol from under her peculiar dress, and presenting it as quickly;—"What?"

"I mane to say, by the horns o' Moses, only you're a kind of a woman, I'd thransmogrophy you."

"Well, be it so; but we had better remain friends. I have here some of the sweet waters of oblivion." She produced a black bottle, and applied it to her mouth, rather with the appearance of drinking some of its contents, than doing so in reality.

If there was any one propensity more palpable than cowardice and cruelty in the hero of the cat-o'-nine tails, it was love of good liquor. He could pour whiskey into himself for a long while ere it produced the slightest addition to his usual exaggeration of speech and manner. Now his teeth watered as he saw the mad-looking woman apparently gulp down that which, from the fragrance it emitted, could be nothing less than the most potent kind of the beverage he loved.

"Here," said the female, to his great relief, "drink and be valorous."

He seized the bottle, and took a long, long draught. Yet in the very act of tasting liberally of her bounty, Saunders planned how he should master the tigress before him. He proposed to retire and order in a reinforcement to seize her. But ere he had made an end either of his libation or his resolves, she snatched the bottle from his grasp, and, approaching the jealous sentinel, invited him also to drink.

"Whoever or whatever you are," observed the man, "here goes to taste the oneen." He too imbibed a good mouthful, though nothing to compare to one of Saunders Smyly's least. That gallant trooper however, crying fair play, pleaded for another turn; and, accordingly, the bottle was once more at his mercy.

The woman now slowly withdrew from the bold yeomen. While they continued to pass the bottle from one to another, each doing his best not to be outdone by his comrade, she seated herself with her back against the wall.

"She's as mad as a March hare," remarked Saunders to the sentinel, after perhaps his fourth mouthful.

"Hu, hu! it's wicked sthrong," replied the other, shaking his head, "a sign it's the right sort. But she was your match, Saundhers, above all I ever seen."

"Do you think I'd go cut down a woman, Tom? No, if she was to give me a gash a foot deep. It's mortial sthrong, sure enough, by the great Sazor."

"Famous stuff of a dark night," answered Tom, stretching his hand for the bottle. It was indeed his turn: Saunders, however, cheated him of a gulp, ere he would relinquish it.

"Au—hau!—a dhrowsy thing to be stayin' awake all nigh, long," digressed Tom; "I wish ould Nick had all the Croppies is Waxford, that keeps us out of our beds, in this sort,—au—hau!"

Yawning, as is well known, is epidemic; the hideous extension of Tom's jaws was followed by that of Saunders Smyly's.

"Hau—u! I didn't sleep what may be called a wink these three weeks, good," said Saunders.

"I'd give a shillin' for a good snore," added Tom, in wavering accents. Almost instantly he had his wish gratis.

I'd sleep for a month, I think—by—the—left-thigh—" and Saunders slipped down beside his comrade. A few incoherent words, which died away in vague sound, and they were both enjoying the blessing they had so recently and loudly lauded.

The woman had awaited the effect of her potion. Now she arose, and, stepping lightly to the watchful guardians of the castle, soon disencumbered Saunders of his keys, and hastened to despatch the business, for the execution of which she had, as we have seen, ingeniously introduced herself into the temporary prison.

Sir William Judkin, dragged from the arms of his lovely Bride, at the very first moment he could call her his own, felt less at his individual disappointment, and at the prospect of facing a court-martial, than he did at the recollection of his mistress and wife left alone to abide the machinations of an abhorred rival. Charges of disloyalty, whatever might be his real sentiments toward King and Government, could not, he knew, possibly be made good against him. Confident of an acquittal, and maddened by his feelings, the young Baronet loudly demanded the trial that must leave him free to rush to his unprotected bride. But it was not deemed expedient yet to meet his wishes. The only consequence of his continued clamour was that he was removed from the large apartment, in which, with many other suspected persons, he had first been locked up, to a small round chamber in the eastern turret of the castle, and there left to his own reflections.

The two towers, to the right and to the left of the old edifice, gave admission, by winding stairs, into the main pile. From the main pile in turn was entrance gained to three apartments in the lesser tower, one situated above the other. And the ground apartment of these three, having a floor of mason-work, a small and strong door unplastered walls, and one or two slits in lieu of

windows, was the dungeon, upon his wedding-day, of the young, the high-born, the titled, the gay, the handsome Sir William Judkin.

Saunders Smyly, as well for the purpose of exercising his new function of locking and unlocking doors, as of plaguing his prisoner with accounts of what was doing in the castle, had occasionally visited him during the day. Through Saunders the young Baronet became acquainted, at intervals, with the progress of his father-in-law's trial, with his condemnation; finally with his death. And Saunders anticipated the same fate for his ward;—"because," as he informed him, "a servant of his had been taken prisoner, after a recent skirmish, with a pike in his hand, and—".

"A servant of mine?" interrupted Sir William, starting up—"what is his name?"

"Brown is his name," answered Saunders.

"Ha! Brown! Gracious God! Then," he muttered, "I am in peril indeed if—Has any one been with him to urge him to give information?"

"Yes!" Saunders answered; "Captain Talbot has been with him. An' from the long conversation they enjoyed together, it is pretty plain they understood each other."

"Talbot!" thought the Baronet—"Talbot! the very fiend of my hopes and fate! The very danger I apprehended!" And Saunders Smyly could see that, for the first time, his prisoner trembled and looked terrified.

This was the yeoman-turnkey's last visit to the turret, previous to the entrance of the strange woman into his fortress. When, shaking his head, and smiling at the certain evidence of Croppyism implied by the agitation he had watched, Saunders closed the door on Sir William, the young man sank upon the crazy chair which had been vouchsafed to his rank as a prisoner, his head drooped towards his breast, his arms fell listlessly by his sides, and, for some time, a succession of strong feelings, aye of passions, battled in his bosom, and shook his muscular frame.

Once more the key grated in the lock of his prison door. In utter disgust and weariness of Saunders Smyly, who, he supposed, would re-enter, he shifted his position, and turned his face to the wall.

But the sound of the step, that came over the threshold, at once so quick, and so light, told him that it was not the striding trooper who now entered. The breathing of the unexpected visitant next startled him. Swinging round on his creaking chair, he saw, with staring eyes and chattering teeth, a face which, from its stony ex-

pression and ashy hue, (fully visible in the glare of a taper the figure carried,) was, he almost believed, the face of an inhabitant of the grave.

"Who are you?" he hoarsely whispered, after he and this apparition had for about the space of half a minute silently regarded each other.

"I am your genius!" he was answered, in a tone which, if spirits speak, belied not his superstitious conclusions: "I am your genius; you are under my guardianship. Arise! I come to deliver you from prison."

"Is such a thing"—Sir William said, evidently questioning his own mind, while he withdrew not his fixed gaze—"is such a thing within the bounds of possibility?" He started again, as the same voice—so hollow, so empty, it seemed the echo of a voice—replied to his random question.

"Yes! it is possible; it is probable; it is certain. I am a being of the tomb: obey the command I have over you. Arise, Sir William Judkin!"

Whether the result of phantasy, or in accordance with a previously arranged plan, the person of this singular woman was arrayed so as to produce supernatural effect. Her face pale, and expressing no feeling, no purpose even, might well have realized our notion of the passionless animation of the dead.

"Arise, I say, and follow me from your prison," she continued, after a pause, during which the young man seemed engaged in incoherently considering the last words she had uttered. He had pressed his hand over his eyes, as if either to shut out the object that fascinated them, or else to assure himself that they did not cheat him with the delusion of a waking dream. A moment after they again encountered that motionless figure and unchanged visage, and their former gaze of chilled amazement changed into one of feverish excitement.

"From prison, you say?—you are come to free me from prison?"

"Yes! follow me to liberty!"

"Lead the way, then, though you be sent from hell!" and he started fiercely to his feet.

The female flitted before him, as if she indeed were a disembodied spirit, giving scarce an idea of sound or motion. They rapidly traversed some desolate apartments of the main building. They gained the hall. Its watchful guardians were still sunk in the deep sleep in which the temptress had left them. Sir William, as he passed them, stooped, unseen by his conductor, for a large pistol,

which had fallen from the sentinel, Tom, and hid it in his breast. Saunders Smyly's sabre also had dropped from the gallant grasp of its owner: this, too, he seized. The door of the hall was now flung open, as if by magic, for his egress. Before issuing forth, the guide turned and faced her follower.

"Throw down the sword!" she said, pointing towards the ground, and assuming a tone and manner of the most absolute authority.

"Command me no longer!—but lead onward if you will;" answered Sir William, with determined defiance.

"Cast the sword from your hand!" she repeated, standing full in the doorway, and so blocking up all exit, save by a decisive and rude contact with her person.

But no puny terrors could unnerve the man who had thus far followed her. He darted forward; he menaced her with his weapon. Still she stirred not. He aimed at her a stroke that, if it had told, must have proved whether or not she was flesh and blood; but the taper she held became extinguished: they were in utter darkness, for the hall-light had burnt out. She evaded his cut. The door, however, was still open, and gave an unobstructed view of the less positive gloom abroad. Sir William sprang through it. There was a slight scream as he passed the threshold: a shot rang close behind him, and he heard, almost felt, the whiz of the ball by his cheek. Still he was unhurt, and still onward he bounded. The single sentinel at the outward gate soon yielded to his impetuous and furious attack. He gained the streets of Enniscorthy; the shout of alarm rising at his heels. A yeoman was leading a horse along: he forced the animal from him, jumped into the saddle, swept like the whirlwind through the little town, and in less than an hour, drew rein before the house where that morning he had received the hand of Eliza Hartley.

CHAPTER XXX.

The liberated bridegroom pulled up before Hartley Court, vaulted from his saddle, and allowed the reeking horse to take his own course over the lawn. Yet, furious as had been his wishes and his speed to enter as well as to gain the house of hope, he did not

at once approach the hall-door. After measuring the old mansion with one glance, as if to assure himself of its identity, he leaned his back against a tree: while his left hand touched the hilt of the pistol he had hidden in his bosom, and the other still grasped Saunders Smyly's sword, the young Baronet's brow fell blacker than the starless night above him, and his teeth grated against each other,—the clenched jaws moving backward and forward with the sound.

At intervals there came muttered words from his parched lips. "I may—I may have the chance first! Ere I lie at his feet, he may writhe at mine! Curses on me that I have hitherto avoided him! That I should be held back by man—or by woman either—even by Eliza! Ay! ay! I see it plainly—he has his trammels around me! This night it must be—or she is lost to me for ever! Lost, as I am lost! The traitor-villain, Brown!—O that he stood at arm's length before me!" Springing to action, he made a mad thrust at another tree near him.

"But come! mine this night she *is!* There, at least, I fail him! Mine this night she is! though in despair and revenge, as much as in love, must I woo her—though dark be the forms that hover round our marriage couch—grief, terror, death,—unfitting inmates of a bridal chamber! Beloved! I come, I come! I come, alone and unattended—through danger and darkness—from scenes of fear and horror—I come to claim my bride! Silent and dull is the house of love. Its black windows emit no festive light—no laugh and no mirthful measure respond within its walls to the throb of the bridegroom's heart. No voice welcomes him but the howl of the night-dog, who wails, perhaps the eternal absence of his old master!" He sprang forward in a state of mind which, as may be judged from his words, bordered upon insanity, and, seizing the massive knocker, beat fiercely upon the door. Nothing answered him but the reverberation of the sound,—first through the edifice, then echoed from a distance behind him. In frantic misgiving he repeated his summons; again echo alone replied to it.

"Not here! not here!" he cried; "torn from me! so soon! this moment in his grasp, perhaps! his poisoned tales whispered in her ear! No, no,—it cannot, must not be! Madness—hell is in the thought! Open, wretches, open! Yield, then, churlish door!" He rushed against it with frantic force; but only recoiled, and fell from the shock. He tried the windows, shattering their glass to get at the shutters within; even these were too strongly barricadoed to yield to his arm. He hastened to walk round the mansion.

Through a small back-window, he thought he perceived a ray of light; but as he forced his way nearer, he found that either his eyes had deceived him, or it had become extinguished. The shutters of this casement closed on the outside: he tugged at them, they gave way. Unconscious of the laceration he received from the shivered glass, Sir William at last stood in treble darkness, under the roof of Hartley Court.

Extending his arms, he groped about. It was a small bed-room in which he found himself evidently belonging to one of the servants. He felt over the bed—it was empty. Shouting out the name of Eliza, and alternately the names of such of the servants as he could remember, he groped to an open door, got into a passage; thence, he concluded, into the kitchen; and thence, into the hall. Here he paused an instant. All was still and dark. It seemed that no living creature could be with himself under the silent roof. He continued his way up-stairs to the drawing room;—to his wife's dressing-room: ere he gained its door, how did he pray that he might find it locked! But no, like all the others within the house, it stood desolately open. And so did her chamber-door. Vainly the bridegroom repeated, at the threshold, the name of his bride.

Unable to reflect farther than by a recurrence to the conviction that his wife was within his rival's grasp, he sprang down-stairs, and again reached the hall, with resolution to return, even in the face of death, to seek her. Impetuously, and therefore with little chance of success, he was seeking the fastenings of the door, when a soft and cautious voice, not far from him, said—

"Ah, then, the Heavens look wid an eye o' compassion on you, this black night, for one poor gentleman!"

"What—what—who is there?" questioned Sir William, turning quickly round in the direction of the voice.

"An' it's nobody is in it bud poor ould Nanny, your honour, my honey."

"Where's Eliza, my wife?"

"That's her poor, purty honour, Lady Eleezabeth Judkin, barrowknight, you're axin for, my pet?"

"Yes, yes! answer quickly—where is she?"

"Ah, an' whose to blame you for axin afther the darlin' crature of a lady: good luck to her, is my prayer. Ochone! an' sure it's she is i-want o' the merciful mercy o' Heaven, this night!"

Although this speech was, according to the ever quick gabbling habits of Nanny's tongue, pronounced in a very short space of time; yet, in his present mood, the intervention only of good wishes and

prayers, instead of the direct answer he reckoned on, infuriated the young Baronet.

"Speak to my question, you wretched old hag!" he said, stamping on the marble hall.

"You're cross wid me, your honour, my pet. Bud, och, that I may'nt sin, bud them that 'ud fault you for bein' cross an' fraptious, 'ud not be them that 'ud remember the rasons you have for it."

"Answer me, or I'll murder you!" He bounded towards the spot whence the voice came, but Nanny evaded his gripe; like a duck popping up her head after she had dived in a place where one least expects her, the old woman now spoke from behind his back.

"Why, your poor honour, my honey, if it's a thing that Miss Eliza that was, and Lady Eleezabeth that is, isn't afther you in Enniscorthy town, as I'm a sinner afore Heaven, blessed be the holy name, I don't know from Adam what's come over her!"

"In Enniscorthy! what does she there?"

"Och, an' hasn't your honour the knowledge, that the poor honey of a lady dhruv afther you an' the darlin' father, that was there, God be good to his poor sowl, Amin!"

"Eternal curses!" he muttered—"and has not since returned?"

"The niver a bit of her or Miss Alicia come next or near this sorrowful-of-all-sorrowful houses, my pet, since the moment they dhruv off afther them that they loved in their hearts widin was dhragged away fornent her hansome eyes;—an' them eyes rowlin out tears that run down her purty cheeks like the rain from the goose's back."

With quick and irregular strides, Sir William paced about the hall, involuntarily obedient to the impulse of that impatient emotion which prompts even the muscles of the body to spurn at rest. The light of a taper gradually approached along the passage that led to the servants' apartments, he saw the aged butler, accompanied by Nanny the Knitter, and followed by a very old woman, also a servant, approach him. Nanny, during the Baronet's taciturn fit, had slipped off to summon their attendance. He stopped and stared at them as they advanced. They also stood still, regarding him.

"Won't your honour," began the old man. But his voice failed him; his features quivered—his limbs tottered with strong emotion, and tears burst from his eyes. It was some time before he could express himself further. His old companion wrung her hands and wept loudly, and the Knitter, with low moans, swayed her body to and fro.

"This is a sorrowful night, Sir William," the old man said at length—"the most sorrowful that ever darkened upon me. My ould eyes ar'n't able to keep from cryin' like any woman; I'd choke if I couldn't cry."

"Where in Enniscorthy shall I find your young lady, Martin?" was the only reply to his lament.

"Won't your honour walk up-stairs? Them that used to be above are not above; but—"

He held the taper at the bottom of the stairs. Sir William, without an observation, sprang up. When, at a slower pace, the others followed, they found him pacing about the drawing-room, as he had done in the hall. At their entrance, he flung himself in a chair, leaned his elbows on a table, and covered his face with his hands. In this position he waited for the account of the sobbing domestic, which it now appeared necessary for him to hear, in order that he might draw from it, if possible, some plan of action. Governed by this impression, he remained seemingly patient, while listening to a narrative almost necessarily broken and unsatisfactory; and taken up in turn, though not as necessarily, by Nanny, and the other old woman. When the butler spoke, indeed, he only once or twice showed symptoms of restlessness. But the statement devolving upon the Knitter, and when she thought to indulge (on her hunkers too) her usual verbosity, he slowly raised his head, looked scowlingly at her, and with a round oath swore, that "if she did not avoid her useless gabble, and confine herself to facts expressed in a few words, he was just in the humour to seize on her, neck and heels, and fling her out at the window." Nanny afterwards declared, that if ever look and tone of voice accorded with a terrible threat, Sir William's look and tone tallied at the moment with this menace. And she would add, that "as sure as she was a lump of a sinner, afore Heaven, blessed be the holy name, she couldn't b'lieve her own two eyes, all out, it was the same face that she saw on the showldhers o' the hansome young barrowknight, the day mornin' when he was goin' to marry himself to the poor, purty pet, Miss Eliza;" and "might she never sin," but she thought, while he was looking at her, that she described a descent to the earth, "heels uppermost."

All the Baronet heard may thus be briefly noted. His bride, having put off her wedding attire had, about an hour after his and Sir Thomas's forced departure, set out in the carriage, accompanied by her aunt, to Enniscorthy. As Nanny first truly related in the hall, neither of the ladies had since reappeared or been heard of. To other matters, apparently of less interest, he also lent an ear.

During the course of the day, yeomen had arrived at Hartley Court, and had seized on all the papers to be found in Sir Thomas's study.

The servants, in obedience to an intimation from their master, had repaired to Enniscorthy Castle to give evidence in his favour, respecting the visit of the insurgents to the house. But, as before noticed, though Sir William now for the first time became acquainted with the fact, Captain Talbot had met them at the gate and refused them ingress. The old butler, amongst the others, had thus been repulsed: he described Talbot's conduct as ferocious. In explanation of the demur to open the door to the Baronet's loud knocking, he learned that, while the yeomen had been employed in collecting Sir Thomas's papers, Nanny, according to her usual habit of observing, quietly and cunningly, every thing and every body she could, had overheard them allude, in whispers, to the valuables which during their search had come under their eyes. Their admiration, particularly, of certain articles of plate, seemed to her more ardent than might consistently be manifested towards the property even of a traitor. So soon as opportunity offered, her suspicions were hinted to the butler; and, having first barricadoed the house, both set to work, late in the evening, to hide in a distant and obscure cellar, beyond the wine vaults, whatever they supposed an object of temptation to covetous visitors. Thus were they occupied when Sir William so loudly knocked; and, concluding that his was the summons of the dreaded invaders, all had crept, like frightened mice, into the mysteries of the subterranean apartments. After a pause, Nanny, presuming on her capacity of "goin' about without makin' much noise," had ventured forth, had crouched herself in a corner of the hall, and there recognising Sir William's voice, had addressed him as has been related.

After the last piece of information which could be afforded had reached the Baronet's ear, he still remained in the position he had at first taken, in order to attend to his humble friends. He being silent, they too held silence, even to Nanny the Knitter. The young man seemed, indeed, an object of extreme compassion, both on account of their knowledge of his excessive grief, as on account of his audible expression of his feelings. For, while his hands yet covered his face, deep groanings, which he would fain have struggled to keep in, often escaped him, and the workings of his frame shook the table on which he leaned.

Suddenly he sprang up. "Saddle me a horse!" he cried to the old butler. "Begone, Martin, without a question or a word. You, women, leave the room also."

The aged servant, as his female companion and the gossip ducked and huddled away, bowed low, and withdrew to obey the commands of his young lady's husband. But the old man, with his feeble pace, had scarce reached the stables, when Sir William Judkin, bearing the light from the room, was there also. Harshly expressing displeasure at the tardiness of his amazed attendant, he proceeded to saddle with his own hand a stout hunter, once the favourite of his father-in-law; mounted precipitately, and was soon beyond the avenue-gate.

The summer morning, mild and lovely, and ushered in by a breeze of softest breathing, which, however, was sufficient to roll away the black clouds of the previous night, had just begun to redden in the east, as Sir William turned, galloping furiously, into the high road to Enniscorthy. The daybreak, the scenery it just indicated, the fresh rush of river and brook, the waking carol of the thrush,—all were delightful, and wooed human interest and admiration. But such things drew from the young man no smile of pleasure, none even of hope, though the heart that closes in sleep and despair beneath the brooding night, will naturally and fitly own the dawn of blessed hope in such a morning. In truth, the swift traveller saw nothing, could see nothing save the troubled images presented by his own mind: his brain was as full and feverish, as it had been under the clouds of midnight.

He had spurred half the distance to Enniscorthy, when, at a point where a boreen, or bridle-road, entered upon the main one, many voices suddenly assailed him with cries of "Stop! stop!" Almost at the same instant, his bridle was seized, and a tumultuous crowd surrounded him.

His first motion was to snatch at the pistol in his bosom,—he had left his sword behind. But before he could draw it out, one observant glance at his detainers informed him that, when they should become aware whom they had in their hands, they were not the description of persons from whom he might apprehend opposition in his course, or injury in life or limb. He had encountered, in fact, a formidable throng of insurgents, of whom some were mounted, but the greater number on foot, shouldering their tall pikes, and marching, or more properly hurrying and huddling on. Their women and children mixed promiscuously among them, compelled, (as in all the ravages in the South, through the burning of their cabins, or the terrors of staying unprotected at home was the case,) to share the fortunes, often in the field of strife, of husbands, fathers, and brothers.

"Stop me not, good friends!" cried Sir William, the instant he had made his observation. "I am the son-in-law of Sir Thomas Hartley, who has met his death in your cause. Your enemies are my enemies. Stop me not! I am for life or death!"

"Life or death, Sir William Judkin?" questioned one of the foremost of the horsemen.

"Yes! If I do not mistake, I answer Mr. Rourke."

"That you do, my worthy friend. But who could hope to meet you at large? We heard you were a prisoner in Enniscorthy Castle, and expected no less than an account of your elevation to the gallows this morning."

"I escaped by a singular chance, Mr. Rourke. But do not now detain me. I have business of importance in Enniscorthy, which must be dispatched before the morning brightens."

"Business of importance? how can that be? If you have escaped from the prison, out of which your worthy father-in-law has been led to his murder, what business can you have with any of his murderers?"

"My wife is in the town, in the power of my enemies and her's. I am spurring to brave them, to rescue her or fall in the attempt."

"Does your head go right, man?"

"Scarcely, scarcely. But this must be attempted."

"Why, your servant, who is in custody in the town, has informed against you as a Croppy!"

"Ay, Sir!" exclaimed Sir William; "accused me of disloyalty?" He stopped and gazed intently forward, as if pursuing a sudden thought to its goal.—"The traitor rascal!" he continued, in less agitation, however, "if I can reach him, he shall meet his deserts. Tell me, tell me, Mr. Rourke, can you, will you, befriend me, and let me try to serve you?"

"Speak your wishes, Sir William."

"Give me a band of brave fellows, and I will storm and win Enniscorthy for your cause."

"Your hand upon it, Sir William! By the life! here we are, a reinforcement proceeding to join the main body assembled with that very intent. Right glad we shall be to have a dashing young fellow, like yourself, engaged in the affair."

"I am with you, then," replied the desperate man, with an air of reckless determination, that shewed he but grasped at the most palpable means of rescuing his mistress and bride. When his resolution was announced by the priest, the shout which escaped the disorderly throng, now once more in motion, told the great value they attached to the signal acquisition they had made.

"How proceeds our cause, Mr. Rourke? I have heard little or nothing about it," said the Baronet, as they continued their march.

"Two considerable bodies of Wexford patriots have assembled," answered the clerical soldier.

"Where? in what positions?"

"Upon two of the many rocky and barren eminences which form remarkable features of our county, whence they can view the approach of an enemy at a good distance, and, in case of attack, have some advantage of ground. A good plan, by the life! and one we would all do well to keep in view. They call these positions camps, Sir William, though, to tell the blessed truth, little resembling the military stations so denominated. The poor fellows spend day and night on those hills, with no covering but the canopy of Heaven. To be sure, the weather is as fine and as favourable as if it came to them upon the prayers of the whole Church."

"But are your two divisions quite inactive?"

"God forbid! They sally down, and run about the country, whenever it's quite convenient, taking some revenge, at last, upon whatever Orange house comes in the way. At the same time," he added sadly, "that the Orange yeomen are burning their desolate cabins, or shooting or bayoneting on the hearth-stones, or by the road-side, such timid friends as have not turned out with the main bodies, or such old men as were not able to turn out. So that, by the life! it's tit for tat between 'em."

"But, surely, this is a very pretty and undecisive mode of warfare?"

"There's something else along with it. One of the armies I spoke of, is posted on the principal eminence in the county, about twelve miles north-east of Enniscorthy town: the other on the hill of Oulard, four miles to its east. Yesterday morning, the first position I'm telling you of, was approached by a force of yeomen cavalry: the poor boys cannot yet be called much better than a mob, in point of discipline, they yielded to the terror armed horsemen always produce amongst a mob, and, not even waiting to be attacked, ran away in all directions."

"You now certainly mention an affair of some importance, Mr. Rourke, but one not much to your credit."

"No, indeed. And, to mend the matter, the victorious yeomen, about as victorious over the real strength of the Wexford Army of Freedom, as was the big *bosthoon* of a Roman Emperor, who said he had conquered old Britain, when he ordered his

soldiers to stuff their pockets with the shells on the beach;—the victorious yeomen, on their way home to their quarters, set fire to about one hundred Catholic dwellings. And, as if to convince us all of the uselessness of temporizing, they shot every straggler, wearing a peasant's coat, who came within their view, or within their skill, with pistol or carbine."

"A disheartening story, in the very opening of our campaign, Mr. Rourke."

"We'll get more used to the thing, by the life! in time, and pull up our losses. Though you will remark, that in this affair there was no loss at all, barring a little of character. And then, you see, Sir William, there's something has happened on Oulard-hill to throw into the scale against it."

"Ay? we have done better there?"

"I'll tell you. A second yeoman-cavalry force marched against our second army, occupying that ground. But when they got close enough to reconnoitre, they seemed to think it was better to let Oulard-hill alone; and so they wheeled to the right-about, and marched back again."

"Why, this is but another piece of pusillanimity, by which we gain little."

"Sure enough. Particularly as our men, like their comrades in the other position I spoke of, were in the very act of scampering before the terrible horse-soldiers, when the terrible horse-soldiers trotted home, afraid of them, by the life!"

"Absurd faint-heartedness on both sides."

"Yes, indeed. But something else happened almost at the same moment, on that same rocky hill of Owlard. Without either party knowing the intentions of the other, a detachment of infantry-militia was advancing to the eminence, by a different route, just as the bold Cavalry were retreating from it. Our men, flying over the hill from the first enemy, saw the second enemy drawn out before them on the plains below, only stopping to gather breath before they charged up. The poor boys also stopped, and suddenly took heart to try their pikes against certainly the most formidable foe of the two. A stratagem was devised. Such as had not yet cleared the top of the hill, threw themselves into a circular ditch, that some good body, without knowing how much good he was doing, had formed as an enclosure: the rest, who had got half-way down, fled back, and disappeared over the summit. The soldiers, imagining the enemy had all retreated before them, advanced upward. Before you could say "Jack Robinson," they were wel-

comed with hearty shouts and wicked weapons. In a few minutes more, the whole of them, barring the officer second in command, a serjeant, and a poor drummer, who yet lives to make a noise in the world, were piked in a heap."

"Good, Mr. Rourke. This little success will give us some of confidence we certainly stood in need of."

"By the life! yes. Though as yet it has not given enough to enable us to decide on the attack of Enniscorthy, and the town lying so handy, only a few miles off."

"What have the victors since done?"

"First, a great deal of damage among the Orangemen, and the Orange houses, within their reach. Next, they quitted Owlard, and encamped, as we call it, on another height, eight miles farther northward, where they were joined by the runaways from the first body of mounted cavalry. And from this position they marched on a village convenient to them, and captured some arms and ammunition, by the life! And thence on Ferns, which also fell into their hands. Such as had caught horses on the route might be seen transforming the large tomes borrowed out of the poor lord Bishop's library, into saddles, as it were, for their nags. And, as they kept moving—no one to bid them stop—southward along the Slaney, they crossed the river within four miles of Enniscorthy, proceeded to one of their favourite eminences, two miles north-west of that good town. In hopes they may at last venture to pay it a visit, it's to reinforce this main army of ours we are now marching, Sir William."

"They must, indeed, have hitherto been very cautious of taking this necessary step, Mr. Rourke; when, according to your account, they have traversed, from their first position to their last one, a circuit of more than twenty miles to arrive at the point, which, after their success against the militia, they might have gained in an hour's marching."

"No doubt, no doubt, cautious they were. Attacking a town seemed such an awful thing to them. But their continued successes, trifling as they are, and the arms and ammunition picked up on their unobstructed march of observation, at last give them, let us hope, a better opinion of themselves. Their present encampment surely means that Enniscorthy is to be ours this blessed day."

Whilst Father Rourke yet spake, he and his reinforcement came within view and hail of the main force he spoke of. Loud and long were the shouts of greeting and welcome exchanged between the victorious insurgents on the height, and the admiring and

ardent friends who approached to add numbers and confidence to their body. Thousand of hats, raised high on pikes, also waved a welcome to Father Rourke's band.

The title of Army, as the term is generally used, could not properly be given to the mass of armed men who crowded the hill of Ballyorvil, preparing for the attack of Enniscorthy. As Sir William joined them, their leaders were employed, by entreaties, by threats, by curses, by shoutings, and by main force, in arranging the unruly throng into some disposition for march and battle. Of their leaders, the generality belonged to the middle class of farmers, and had been dubbed, or had dubbed themselves, with the military titles of General, Colonel, or Captain, according as the esteem or consideration in which they were held operated upon the opinions of the multitude. By force of the predominance which superior intellect, or courage, or daring, never fails to afford, bold spirits had already raised themselves above their compeers: men whose former characters had stood well for bravery and sagacity, here found their claims admitted and rewarded. But as these various leaders, of few degrees in grade—for no one would answer a less sounding title than that of Captain—endeavoured, as has been mentioned, to raise their tones of command above the general clamour of voices, in which the shrill screams of women and children took no inconsiderable part; as they shouted, and pulled, and dragged those whom they considered under their command to the positions they decreed should be taken up; it was easy to perceive that their martial titles were little more than nominal. That the insubordinate throng might follow their leader in conflict, or gain spirit from the boldness of his example, but would allow him, meantime, no more superiority, and pay him no more deference, than is conceded by a mob to its ringleader.

To the front of what may be called the centre of this self-willed force, were collected all such as bore fire-arms: they might amount to eight hundred men. Some shouldered the muskets they had wrested from the soldiers on Owlard-hill, and also wore the cross-belts and pouches of that ill-fated detachment: others bore muskets, found in the first village they had, as Mr. Rourke described, conquered on their roundabout and wavering march: others clutched guns of every kind and calibre, plundered from houses, or drawn from places of long concealment to grace this anticipated day. But, distinguished amongst the "gunsmen," as they were termed, stood the hardy inhabitants of the eastern sea-coast beyond the town of Wexford, carrying very long fire-locks, used by them in shooting

water-fowl. The members of this little band were famed as the best marksmen of the force: a sharp-shooter company, as it were, of a very unusual kind. The men were well used to the enormous guns they bore, and quite proud of the consideration they justly enjoyed amongst a throng, of whom the greater number did not know even how to load their pieces. They were particularized by the title of Shelmaliers, the name of the barony whence the first of such valued "guns" came to join the insurgents: when afterwards reinforced by all who grew expert in the use of the trigger, they became still more distinguished for their real good services during the memorable campaign. At their sides hung portions of cows' horn, to hold their powder and ball; and these were other marks of superiority. For, excepting the few hundreds who ostentatiously displayed the pouches of the military they had slain, the greater number of the "gunsmen" carried their scanty supplies of ammunition in morsels of paper, or in old rags, thrust inconveniently into the depths of their pockets.

Behind "the gunsmen" arose a wood of long pikes, roughly fashioned from the anvil, without polished surface from which to reflect the sunbeams, or to cast the glitter of chivalry around the shadow of death. Black and rude, they seemed, indeed, fit instruments for that species of warfare—civil strife—in which chivalrous feeling, as well as chivalrous display, so seldom finds a place. At each wing, a dense mass of men, bearing the same savage weapon, supported the centre.

For the most part, those who were styled Commanders, had contrived, like poor little Peter Rooney, to fasten to their persons some ill-fashioned appendage of a green colour. Materials for this purpose had been eagerly snatched at wherever they appeared, during the late march. Some displayed a broad green sash, some a green silk handkerchief bound round their arms, some a green cockade, or hatband. But the general crowd remained in their usual costume, except that many had doffed their brogues, stockings, or coats, as too cumbrous to be borne into action on a broiling summer-day. Flags of any green stuff that could be procured, uncouthly shaped, and clumsily attached to rough poles, appeared, at irregular distances, among the black and frowning masses of pike-heads. Sometimes their bearers waved them to and fro, and then there arose shouts of admiration as well as zeal. These unmottoed and unemblazoned banners seemed a great stride towards military organization and character.

While the leaders essayed, in the manner described, to get their companies into marching order, a crowd of unarmed men, and of

women and children, were hallooing together a great drove of cows and oxen. Of these the Irish insurgents of 1798 made somewhat the same use as did the Carthaginian general, two thousand years before. The cattle were pushed in front of the whole body, with the intent of driving them, in order to create confusion, into the ranks of the enemy. As soon as this curious advance had been formed, the insurgent force, shouting furiously and deafeningly, rushed down hill, and poured into the road which led to the town.

As a feature of the times, some mention may here be expected of the few Roman Catholic clergymen of the county of Wexford, who, like Father Rourke, held distinguished command in this undisciplined concourse. These gentlemen derived their sway, as much from the usual legitimate claims of bravery or station, as from a very general belief that, along with the blessing of charmed persons, which bullet, bayonet, or cannon-ball could not hurt or harm, they held in their hands the scales of defeat or victory.

One, a stoutly made, swarthy man of middle age, joined, or, it is said, led forth the first small band who raised the cry of insurrection. He is described as a fanatical person, acting only from the goad of his aroused feelings, and regarding that as a good cause, which alone seemed to promise safety to himself and his terrified flock, and predominance to a religion he fancied he was born to spread far and wide. And this individual, either because he had originated "the rising," or that his views came nearest to those of the multitude, ranked, on the present occasion, as Commander-in-Chief. He rode with his colleagues, in front (after the drove of cattle) of the tumultuous concourse; a long rusty sword dangling awkwardly round his legs, and as rusty a pistol swinging by a cord from the pummel of his saddle.

Another reverend Captain was a man of weak and shallow intellect, whose junction with the insurgents resulted from mere momentary impulse, when he found his chapel burnt down by a zealous band of Orange yeomen.

With Father General Rourke the reader is already acquainted. As he strode before his chosen band, now disdaining a horse, with his pike for a walking-staff, he seemed, although his rusty black suit was bad attire for a military leader, exactly occupying the place nature had intended him to fill. There was yet another clergyman, of giant stature, who, it is said, when he flung off his sacerdotal character, relapsed into a nature of great original ferocity. But we must continue our narrative.

CHAPTER XXXI.

It was after the hour of noon, of a sultry summer day, that the first formidable insurgent throng of the County of Wexford, still preceded by their advance of horned cattle, set forward, shouting until, as Pistol would say, "the welkin rang," to attack the town of Enniscorthy. They were followed, in numbers nearly equal to their own, by the clamorous women and children, many bearing the pikes of father, of husband, of brother, or of some other relative, to be handed to the insurgent soldier after he had expended his fire-arm ammunition, or even after his first musket-shot, if chance led him to close action: it was regularly stipulated that the weapon-bearer should always be at hand, prepared to effect the necessary change of arms.

At four o'clock, the town was in possession of the insurgents. Its garrison, of about three hundred men, gallantly defended themselves for more than three hours against the furious but irregular attacks of their untutored assailants.

The greater portion of Enniscorthy, or at least the more important portion, lies in a hollow: its thatched suburbs run upascents that at every side inclose it. These had been fired by the destroying assaulters, while they contended for entrance into the better quarter of the town. They at last possessed themselves of that quarter; and we now speak of the ensuing half-hour, during which the majority of the shrieking inhabitants—the young, the old,—the wealthy, the needy—beauty and deformity, flew pell-mell, with the retreating garrison, through scorching flames, along the scarce less scorching and dusty road, to the capital of the county, the important town of Wexford. Hundreds of burning dwellings sent masses of fire to surcharge the already sultry atmosphere. Until, in the lower streets of Enniscorthy, overhung by clouds of smoke, and strewed with hot ashes, respiration became painful, and exertion difficult. And through dense vapour and glowing air, pealed the triumphant and deafening shouts of the ferocious visitors, as, trampling indifferently the heaped bodies of comrades and foes, they rushed on to plunder the abandoned houses, and to pour into their parched throats whatever liquor they could seize upon. Some wastefully and wantonly destroying property that they could not appropriate; others loading their attendant women with portable articles of value; others giving cause for the unheeded cry of supplication, distinctly heard amid the

whoop of rude triumph, while they dragged trembling wretches from places of concealment, to be piked in the streets, already too deeply stained with blood.

All was shout, shriek, and clamour below; while overhead roared the ravenous flames, when Sir William Judkin, not an undistinguished leader in that day's battle, stood before the entrance-gate of the Castle of Enniscorthy.

Through every dungeon slit and window were presented the anxious faces of the prisoners, who, abandoned by their guards and turnkeys—Saunders Smyly amongst the foremost—yet had been left too well locked and bolted in to allow of their emancipating themselves from durance. Sir William scanned over with straining eye the countenances that appeared. At length his glance fixed ominously upon one.

"Two blows more, and it yields," he cried to Shawn-a-Gow, who, wielding a great sledge, battered at the ponderous door;—"quick! quick! I see him."

The two prescribed blows followed, and door and lock and bolt gave way in shivers. There was a wild shout within, then a rush of the enfranchised captives, some hastening to enrol themselves, in revenge against their enemies, amongst the victorious insurgents; others to indulge in the general licentiousness. The pale-faced wretch upon whom Sir William had bent his baleful glance, came forward. On the threshold he started back, and, hastily pulling his hat over his brows, sought to mingle unobserved with the general throng. But the watchful eye of the Baronet instantly marked him out: as instantly the grasp of his former master was on his collar. The terrified man seemed confounded into nonentity.

"This is the fellow—this is Brown," said Sir William, addressing Shawn-a-Gow—"this is the Orange-traitor and informer!"

"Pitch him to us!" growled the stern smith.

"Oh, master, master! only listen to me!" gasped the victim, vainly endeavouring to sink upon his knees. But the strong arm of his indignant master upheld him. Then, swinging him round, he flung him towards Shawn-a-Gow, and he was dead ere he fell to the ground—four pikes had entered his shrinking body.

"Cold iron is informer's hire," remarked the father of Tom Delouchery, as he withdrew his reeking weapon. And he and his fellow-executioners hastily departed to rejoin the unbridled rioting, of which the fierce shouts reached them from every quarter, and which they had only left in obedience to the requests of so important a leader as the young Baronet.

"This done," soliloquized Sir William, as, left alone with the body of his former servant, he wiped his brow from the stains of moisture, of dust, and of blood,—"this done—this villain punished—I must now speed to seek my wife."

His horse stood near. Actively and hastily mounting, he made his way, with as much speed as the intervening throngs would allow, to an inn at which he had heard Eliza Hartley and her aunt had put up on the previous night. Here additional excitement to his already exasperated mood awaited him. The inn had been invaded by an unbridled crowd of riotous insurgents. As he heard them shouting forth their clamours and threats for liquor, heavily clattering from room to room, and banging doors and breaking windows, obviously to exercise their newly acquired privilege of doing what they liked in a situation they had once never dreamt of attaining, the alarmed husband naturally shuddered at the idea, that his sensitive and unprotected bride might already have been exposed to the mercy of such boisterous intruders.

He flung himself from his jaded horse, burst through the rabble rout, and was very near experiencing a rough acceptance, only that he chanced to be recognised by one of their noisy set. He called loudly for the landlord, but was quickly answered that "the murtherin' Orangeman took to the run, just in time to miss a reckonin' long scored against him, one that he would think worse of than the most robbin' reckonin' himself ever once scored against a lodger."—From which Sir William inferred, that the conscious proprietor, being of the opposite party, had, along with almost all the other Protestant inhabitants of the town, joined or followed the garrison on their retreat to Wexford.

Thus, without a clue to guide him in his search after his bride, the young Baronet rushed from room to room, vainly calling upon her name. In a principal bed-room, after exploring many others, he found a group of "pikemen," loud in ribald mirth, as they pressed forward and gaped over each others' shoulders, to view something held by the leader of their pillaging. Bursting on, Sir William snatched at his own miniature, the glass of which the man just then held up to view, brightening, or rather dimming it, with the sleeve of his rough frieze coat, as he cried out—

"By gonnies! an' sure my fort'n is made, for good-an'-all. I'll turn mysef into a gallanty showman—A penny apiece to see the raree-show, boys!—a penny apiece!—" He drew back his hand as Sir William endeavoured to seize the miniature with—"Masther,

asy, asy; every man's loock is his fort'n. D'you want to see the show for nothin', Sir?"

"That picture is mine, my good fellow;—give it me—give it—"

"Make that out, if you can. Didn't I find it here, afore it was lost?"

"Come, come!" flinging him money—"give it now."

"Here, then, faith, an' I wish you joy o' your bargain. By the pike in my hand, I wouldn't swap the half o' this for a score of 'em. As you're in the humour," he continued, winking on his companions, "who knows bud you'd buy another or two that fell in my way? Here's a glove wouldn't go on my thumb; an' here's a ring I'd give my sweetheart, only it's about a mile an' a half too narrow for Peg's little finger. Will you offer?"

"Double their value!" answered Sir William, his hand trembling with eagerness and dread as he recognised his bride's right-hand glove, and the wedding-ring he had, the previous morning put on her finger.

"'Tare-an'-age!" resumed the collector of curiosities, "maybe this, too, 'ud lie in your way? You can have it chape." Exhibiting a child's rattle he had somewhere picked up.

A loud laugh at his waggery was interrupted by a sudden and expressive shout in the street, which caused all the men to stop and listen, and then seriously to question each other as to its cause.

"The Orangemen cum back again, I'll hould a groat!" said one.

"To see the fun" was resolved on, and forth they issued, shouting in answer to the challenge without.

The man from whom Sir William had got the miniature, glove, and ring, was one of the last to leave the room. The Baronet seized him by the arm.

"See, now! Sure, I knew I'd put the temptation in you," said the fellow, grinning broadly as he again held out the rattle.

"Where did you find the other things?" demanded Sir William.

"D' ye see the bed there?"

"The bed!"

"Yes—there I found 'em."

Sir William stared for a time, seemingly unconscious of his situation, while his eyes rested on the bed. Suddenly he turned round his head to ask another question of his informant: the man was gone, and he remained alone in the chamber, or seemingly alone, as it proved to be. A rustling noise reached him from a press at one side. He sprang to the spot in all the eagerness of hope, and

pulled open the folding-doors. A woman appeared within it, but not his wife. He seized her, and forced her from her concealment.

"Who are you? Do you belong to the house?"

"I'm only a poor innocent sarvant girl, Sir, that has no more harum in me nor the time I was born, Sir. I was only hiden from the Croppies, Sir."

"Do you belong to the house?"

"I'm an honest father's an' mother's child, Sir, an' I'm an honest poor crather myself. I can show my charakther to you, Sir, undher the hand o' Misthress Malone, that sells the soap an' candles in Market-sthreet, an' there's one Misthress Maguire, that—"

"Answer my question!—Are you a servant of this house?"

"I was only follyin the childher, Sir, an' doin' a hand's turn, over-an'-hither."

"Can you tell me who last occupied this sleeping-chamber?"

"It was a dauther of Sir Thomas Hartley, Sir. As purty a sowl as ever my two livin' eyes opened on. An' an ould lady wid her."

"Do you know what has become of these ladies? When did you see them last?"

"Why, then, I'll tell you, Sir, an' nothin' bud the truth, all the same as if I was on my dyin' bed, an' they the last words I'd ever spake; or all the same as if a big Croppy had his pike to my breast this moment. Yestherday, Sir, it might be about one o'clock in the day, or maybe arlier, or maybe later, I won't be all out sartin, bud 'twas nigh hand from one, one way or th' other, becase—"

"Never mind the time! Be brief—quick, quick!"

"Well, then, Sir, out o' their carriage I seen them comin' yestherday at the dour. It wasn't long afther till I seen 'em get into it again, an' it dhruv off. I'm tould they went to beg an' pray for the life o' Sir Thomas, that was hanged last night, by candle-light, for bein' a Croppy. The carriage was away for an hour or more, when it came back to us again; an' the ladies got out at the dour a second time, Sir, houldin' down their heads as they went upstairs. Then we soon hard a ring from their room. 'Here, Jinny,' says the misthress, spakin to me, Sir, 'pull your cap sthraight over your eyes, throw off the *prauskeen*,* rub your face in a great hurry, an' lave the child to me, an' run up to see what's wantin'.' 'Here, my honey,' says I, spakin' to the child, 'go to the mammy,' an' he set up the squall, Sir, bud—"

* Coarse apron.

"Silly creature! leave out this wretched stuff, and tell me of Miss Hartley."

"I will, Sir.—I didn't think it was any hurt or harum, Sir—"

"Well, go on."

"Yes, Sir. The rason it cum for me to go up, Sir, was becase the house was to and fro. The waither, Jack Sherry, gone to larn the news about the Croppies, an' the poor masther forced to be out sodgerin—So, Sir, in I came, an' I made my curtshy to the poor ladies. There was the nice, purty young crathur lyin' on the bed, an' her hands wringin' this way, an' the nice rosy colour gone from her cheeks, an' her lips as white as the cambric muslin, an' she moanin' an' sighin' so pitiful, Sir."

Sir William Judkin here startled the narrator, breaking away from her, and rushing about the chamber like a maniac. After a pause, during which she eyed him in some misgiving, he commanded her to continue.

"I will, Sir.—'Would you be wantin' any thing at all, my ladies,' says I, makin' my curtshy—'A glass of water, quick, good girl,' says she, makin' answer. Down I went, an' brought it up, fresh an' sweet. The ould lady gave it to Miss Hartley, an' I went my ways, an' it didn't fall in my way to see 'em again. Bud, this mornin' as I hard, about seven o'clock, Sir, Capt'n Talbot ordhered the carriage to the dour."

"Who?"

"Capt'n Talbot, Sir, indeed-an'-deed, Sir," answered the girl, much terrified at the sudden start of her catechist. "Sure we all thought the sight ud lave our eyes to see him, that people say, hanged her father wid his own hand, havin' any call to Miss Hartley, or to her comin' or goin', about her at all."

"Had he previously gained admission to the ladies?"

"Why, then, I don't know, full out sart'n, Sir. Bud last night, as I was goin' up-stairs, in the dark, to look afther the child, an' he wakenin' in a great roar, Sir, at the same time, sorrow's in me, but I thought I saw Capt'n Talbot skulkin' by the side o' the dour, outside o' this room, Sir. Only I won't take it on me to say so, of a downright sartinty."

"Hell and furies!"

"Oh, Sir, 'twas none o' my fault. I'm a poor crather of a girl, wid good carakthers—"

"And it was in his carriage that Miss Hartley left the inn?"

"Yes, Sir. An' he put up the step wid his own hands."

"Who told you this?"

"Murtoch Kane, the stable-boy, Sir. An' sure, I b'lieve it's Murtoch got the horses ready."

"Where is he to be found?"

"Below in the yard, Sir, he ought to be, if he hasn't left his work to join wid the Croppies."

Sir William was hurrying away to seek the person named, when the terrified girl besought him to stop an instant, and just tell her if the Croppies wouldn't kill her. Having received a hasty assurance of safety, she offered to accompany him to the stable-yard.

It generally occurs, that when we are least in the vein to encounter thwarting circumstances, they rapidly present themselves to us. In his half-frenzied search after information, Sir William Judkin was again doomed to meet an interruption, which in his calmest mood would have irritated him.

Murtoch Kane was one of those vagabonds, to be met with about every inn, who, without any ostensible calling, are extremely ingenious in taxing travellers' purses for the performance of various petty services, always unsought, and most frequently unnecessary. It is needless to add that such characters seldom lay claim to morals or religion, and often excel in the indulgence of every grovelling vice and propensity. We would not pause, at this stage of our story, to characterize even slightly the individual in question, but that, added to the traits common to all his tribe, Murtoch Kane's name is still remembered in Enniscorthy as the principal executioner of insurgent vengeance, as the actual perpetrator of the greater number of cold-blooded murders, on the rocky hill which rises above the town, committed during fair-fighting elsewhere.

He was a ragged fellow, about twenty-six years of age, with a countenance of which the inherent malignity was disguised beneath a show of low humour, or rather of affected carelessness. As Sir William advanced towards the stable to seek him, he came staggering forward, evidently intoxicated, a faded green ribbon tied round his battered hat, a cockade at one side, and a pike in his hand.

The "poor girl wid the good carakthers" pointed him out to Sir William as the object of his search, and the young Baronet accordingly accosted him as he staggered by.

"Stop, my man—a question."

"For the Green or the Orange?" demanded Murtoch Kane.

"For the Green, and the Green for ever!"

"Hurrah, then! an' it's well you said it. This 'ud be through your backbone if you said any thing else. Mind what I tell you. I'd shake paws wid a mad-dog, bud the pike, the pike for the Orangeman!—Ay, an' they'll get it, right an' left, day an' night. Their pay-day is come, and who'd refuse 'em their long reckonin'?"

"Hearken! you helped to procure horses for Sir Thomas Hartley's daughter to leave Enniscorthy, last night?"

"Ay, they hanged him up by candle-light," mistaking the question, "an' the Orange murtherer that done the job, he tuck off the poor daughther. Oh!" he uttered a bellow, "I'd give a gallon o' whiskey to lay one hand on that *skibbeah*,* Talbot."

"If you dislike him so much, why did you assist him to carry away Miss Hartley?"

"Why did I? Who are you that's axin'?"

"You saw the young lady enter the carriage?" questioned Sir William evasively; bent upon extracting information quietly from the intoxicated and unmanagable Murtoch.

"To be sure I did! What have you to say agin Sir Thomas's daughther?"

"Nothing. I am her friend, and, if possible, would rescue her from Talbot."

"Oh, the decaivin Orange thief! Sure, I didn't know a word it was he was to go off by her side, until afther they tuck to the road. Then I overhard his crony, the black Orangeman that bribed me to stale out the horses, sayin' to another, as much as that it was all Talbot's job. Oh, murther!" he bellowed again.

"You can tell which road they went?"

"To be sure I can, if I like it. Oh! why didn't he just wait till the boys come in this mornin'!"

"The road to Wexford, you say?" asked Sir William, at a venture.

"Yes, the road to Waxford town. What's that to you?"

"You are certain?" giving money.

"Sart'n, your grandaddy!" doggedly clutching the bride; "do you take me for a fool? Who says it wasn't to Waxford? Here's Murtoch Kane, that'll pike a score of Orangemen every day the sun gets up, an' who dares say it to him? Whoo!"

"Certainly not I, since you *are* so sure of the road Talbot took with Miss Hartley."

"Sure! I wish I was as sure o' meetin' him, the Orange hang-

* Executioner

man, at the next turn o' the next sthreet. Hurrah for the bould Croppy boys! hurrah!" and he staggered off, yelling out—

"Rise up, my poor Croppies, you're long enough down,
An' we'll pike all these Orangemen out o' the town,
Down, down, Orange, lie down!"

During this dialogue, it was with difficulty Sir William could keep in the boiling ferment of his blood, or bring his trembling lips to articulate the necessary questions. At length it seemed indeed certain that his bride was in the power of his detested rival. Nothing but an instinctive consciousness of the necessity of arming himself with information for the pursuit, had momentarily checked his turbulent fury. Now, he did not hesitate an instant in taking the only measures—though insanity itself might have hesitated in taking them—which his wild passions suggested. He sought his horse. The poor tired animal had found his unasssisted way to a stable, and was eagerly snatching a mouthful of food. He dragged it from this needful indulgence, mounted, and again forcing his way through the rushing crowds of insurgents, and over the trampled bodies of slain, and through the yet flaming suburb, galloped towards Wexford.

But ere he had quite cleared the crowded streets of Enniscorthy, he became confusedly aware, from the explanatory clamour on every side, of the meaning of the continued shout which had attracted the notice and roused the curiosity of the first persons he had encountered at the inn. It was the expression of an agreement, on the part of the greater body of the victors, to evacuate the town, and take up their position on the rocky eminence above it, subsequently distinguished as the scene of Murtoch Kane's massacres, aided by other insurgents, who remaining there, either in cowardice, or for the satiation of highly excited revenge, perpetrated cruelties for which the mass of the peasant-army were not accountable. The reason urged by the leaders to the licentious mob for thus abandoning the conquered town were strong. Namely, the danger that a greater force than they had yet encountered might march upon Enniscorthy, and surprise them in the midst of their riot and disorder. Yet (Sir William, absorbed as he was by a private question, could not fail to notice the fact,) it proved no easy matter to induce the victors to give up their conquest, and the remaining spoils of their victory. And though at length the greater number yielded to the threats, the prayers, and

the actual coercion of their nominal leaders, a sufficient body, acknowledging no command, remained behind to continue during the night the excesses begun in the heat of triumph.

The Baronet still pressed on his weary steed along the road to Wexford. We repeat, that even a madman might have shrunk from the course he was pursuing. Alone he approached a town in possession of the King's troops, and where a hundred eyes were ready to recognise him at a glance, as the rebel commander, Sir William Judkin. Yet it may be questioned if he once weighed, or even thought of the risk he ran. One purpose mastered and filled his mind: one passion possessed him. To encounter Talbot, even if he could not meet his wife, to force from him an account of her situation, and then to strike him dead at his feet. This was all that the despairing lover, husband, and rival, now lived for. Could he but once work his vengeance, the thought of instant destruction to himself after it, only called up a grim smile upon the features of Sir William.

Within three miles of his destined goal, his horse sank exhausted. Revengefully spurning the gasping beast, he bounded on a-foot.

The town wall of Wexford was standing in full preservation, so that none could gain ingress save through the archways, in which massive gates once stood, and which, at his approach, the panic-struck garrison were hastily barricading and blocking up. At the gate he was instantly recognised and apprehended. The large pistol he had seized the night before was still in his breast: he prepared to use it,—it was wrested from him, and his life had been forfeited on the spot, but that the identical yeoman-Captain he came to seek interfered to save him. Sir William struggled hard to leave the grasp of his captors and spring upon his rival. But Talbot coolly ordered him to be conveyed by main force to the prison of the town. Notwithstanding his continued resistance, in which he evinced the strength as well as the rage of a foaming madman, half-a-dozen of athletic yeomen dragged him through the streets. With brain on fire, and the blood boiling like melted ore through his veins, he was once more a captive, better secured than even in his last dungeon, under lock, bolt, bar, and a succession of formidable doors.

CHAPTER XXXII.

From many respectable fellow-prisoners, confined like himself either upon the suspicion or the direct charge of disloyalty, Sir William, on his entrance into gaol, encountered anxious questions concerning the successes and plans of the insurrectionary force. His fierce answers, or his sullen silence, yielded little information to the catechists, and only caused them to set him down for the maniac he actually was.

After some time, however, he naturally became alive to the subject which continued to be discussed around him. Whether or not the insurgents would advance upon Wexford, and whether or not they would prove as successful in that town as they had proved in Enniscorthy, now presented, in connexion with his private interests and fate, a most important question. As he had helped to burst the gate of Enniscorthy Castle for the liberation of all, except one, pent up within its walls; so, in the event of Wexford falling into the hands of the peasant force, friends would not be wanting, or slow, to fling open the doors of his present dungeon. Thus, and thus only, he might once more be free to pursue the only objects for which he breathed.

It would seem that he had taken up arms against the Government of his country only because, or chiefly because, that step promised, at the moment, to speed him on his course of rescuing his wife, and avenging himself and her upon Talbot. Events, however, since appeared to suggest that he had accidentally sided with the party most likely to gain predominance in the contest.—It is known, that while the insurgents of the County of Wexford proceeded, as we have seen, triumphantly, from the day of their rising, all intelligence of the fate of their fellow-insurgents in other counties was shut out from them. So that, according to the easy credulity of taking for granted what we wish for similar and simultaneous success, throughout all the disturbed districts, was assumed as certain. Hence, even Sir William Judkin, particularly in his present fiery mood, might, apart from personal motives, see no reason to reget his choice of a cause. Regret were useless, too, even were there reason for it: in occasional moments of mental recollection, he haughtily admitted the fact. He had fought against his King: death, in case of ultimate failure and apprehension, was the forfeit. Standing or falling by his party, he dared that forfeit. Perhaps something lurked in his

nature to relish the prospect of bold adventure to be encountered, and deeds of valour to be accomplished in the character of a popular commander. If not, it is certain thatwith such stirring views his present reckless temper fully sympathized.

After some sullen indulgence, therefore, of the fury and despair which had possessed him upon his first entrance into the prison, Sir William, in common with his fellow-captives, anxiously calculated the probable movements of the insurgents.

No less anxiously were these movements watched by the garrison and people of the town.

The capital of the county is eleven Irish miles south-west of Enniscorthy. Yet, from many points in Wexford, the dense clouds of smoke, arising out of the conflagration of that part of the conquered town which had been fired, could distinctly be viewed. The militia detachment, which had met so signal a fate upon the hill of Oulard, had advanced to the insurgent position from Wexford: the wild screams of the wives and children of the slain soldiers scarce ceased to fill the ears of the inhabitants, when the defeated garrison of Enniscorthy, covered with blood and dust, and accompanied or followed by a throng of fainting fugitives, crowded their streets for shelter. Young and tender beauty, accustomed from infancy to all the conveniences and little vanities of affluence, tottered in a-foot, gladly clinging for support to the arm of the common soldier. Mothers, respectable too, clasping their babes to their breasts, were just able to stagger through the gates, when they dropped, covercome by fatigue and terror. Both had escaped, perhaps after witnessing the massacre of father or of husband, and in the wild instinct of self-preservation, had rushed, unconsciously, through flame, and shot, and shout, and groan, many miles along a dusty road, and under the meridian rays of a burning sun.

The numbers of the insurgents, too great to be opposed; their frantic courage, and murderous ferocity; all was exaggerated by the panic-stricken fugitives to their Wexford friends. And while such accounts sent some of the shuddering hearers to terrify their families with fearful forebodings, others, secretly combined in the United Irish cause, listened in different feelings and anticipations and stealthily withdrew to arrange amongst their confederates the best means of effectually assisting their triumphant brethren, in case of an attack upon the town.

As has been seen, when Sir William Judkin reached one of the gates, some measures were also being taken to fortify the place. We have noticed also that the town-wall stood in complete preservation.

And it was defended by square castles, differing, in more points than merely that of their form, from other more ruinous fortresses of the kingdom, yet, together with the solid walls, affording good means of resistance, even by a small garrison, against any number of such irregular besiegers as were now expected to approach. If vigorous precaution had been taken, and a vigorous defence made, there can be little doubt that Wexford would have defied the impetuous insurgents, at least for a sufficient length of time to allow of the advance of a relieving force. Nay, had its wise men only left the insurgents to themselves, to contend with their own distracted and uproarious councils, and even with their doubts of their own ability, however hitherto successful, to attempt so serious an affair as the attack of a County town, it is very probable that the good Wexfordians might have remained at peace till the end of the short-lived campaign. But the terror of the pike-head, or the itch for diplomacy, ordered matters otherwise. In what manner, as well as for proof of the assertions just made, we must turn back to their noisy foes to explain.

The lower town of Enniscorthy is situated at different sides of the Slaney, and is connected by a rude bridge. Above that portion of it, upon the eastern bank of the river, and at about a quarter of a mile's distance, appears the almost conical eminence of the not uncelebrated Vinegar-hill. To its base is a gradual ascent from the town. Then it rises suddenly, presenting a surface, partly of grey rocks, some swelling out in large masses, some half-clothed with dwarf furze, and partly of intervening patches of spare grass, which draw from the scanty mould, during winter's moisture only, their verdant livery; while in summer they become parched into a russet colour, blending with the general barrenness of the hill-side.

The morning before the attack on Enniscorthy, a pleasing and peaceful view might have been enjoyed from the top of Vinegar-hill. It seemed standing in the midst of an extensive amphitheatre of sister eminences, of different elevations and forms, and which receded over one another to different distances, each more or less tinted, according to its remoteness or nearness, with the atmospheric hue which, better than any other finesse of nature, suggests the relative places of large objects. Of these many encircling heights, some had a soft, undulating shape, some the hard, rugged outline, that proclaims a rocky brow. Beyond the near and middle ones, the whole rural panorama, only varied by swell or hollow, presented an almost universal character of sloping cultivation. Yet other objects relieved the scene. To the north, at a distance of many

miles, the old black castle of Ferns was visible, a blue cone of hill towering beyond it. To the west, the eye travelled to the very bases of the ragged Blackstairs Mountain, and to the more massive Mount Leinster, the bounds of the county in that direction. The town appeared beneath, seemingly at the foot of the eminence, its suburbs stretching up the adjacent ascents, part of the main town also climbing to join those less considerable streets, while the other part lay in a sudden hollow by the river. And the sinuous river could be seen, miles distant,—first winding under a remote bridge; then, ere it reached the nearer one of Enniscorthy, dividing, round an island, into two distinct currents: then passing beneath, and separating the scattered town: and then, still visible for two miles of its sea-bound course, gradually widening, yet retaining its mazy character, and overlooked by slanting wood, or green hill, or embowered mansion.

But though, upon the day when we are called to the summit of Vinegar-hill, the general features of this fine prospect were necessarily distinguishable, yet to the eye they were disfigured by the blotches they then wore. Wherever, almost literally speaking, a picturesque cottage or cabin, or a rural mansion, should have stood peacefully basking in the summer light, arose thick smoke or decaying flame, or blackened ruin; the humble ornaments of the landscape having been devastated by the Orange party, the more important by the insurrectionists. The thatched suburbs of Enniscorthy, which, previous to yesterday's savage contest, had stretched up the slopes over the river, were now a dingy, shapeless heap of confused ruin. Some of the doors in the lower town yawned wide, since they had been flung or burst open by the fierce invaders: others that remained shut, gave yet a distinct idea of desolation. Masses of dead or motionless bodies, choking, along with black thatch and broken furniture, the narrow streets, were fearfully visible to the eye, a few wild figures only stalking through them. And if the spectator, curious to analyze the general horror, but descended the hill-side, he might perceive that the intoxicated Croppy often slept out, amongst these groups of dead, his deep debauch of the previous night. That, in some instances, his unconscious head rested on the corpse of his comrade, and in others was pillowed upon the silent breast of his party opponent—perhaps upon that of the victim of his own particular vengeance. While the figures which had appeared in motion from the hill-top, would now prove to be some moaning woman, who came to turn up the faces of the slain peasants, searching for the remains of near and dear relatives; while others, with

garments tucked round them to avoid the stain of blood, prowled amongst the dead of the other side, only in quest of plunder.

All this, to a merely observant and reasoning spectator, would, the morning after the battle of Enniscorthy, have appeared a sad and a revolting sight. In few of the vast throng assembled on Vinegar-hill did it arouse any feelings, save those of fierce exultation. Conquerors, at least in civil war, seldom weep, like Cæsar, over the havoc they have made. In the present case, if the triumphant multitude at all reflected on their actions, it was but to consider them as their sole means of avoiding the destruction they had dealt out to others. The still numerous reinforcements which continued to repair to the prominent rendezvous, brought with them such accounts of the continued aggressions, in cold blood, of the Orangemen of remote districts, as served to render the victors of Enniscorthy not only proud of the slaughter they had committed, but athirst for more of the blood of their would-be exterminators.

The leaders, after long perseverance in the efforts we have mentioned in the former chapter, ultimately succeeded, during the evening of the capture of Enniscorthy, in concentrating the greater number of their force upon the conspicuous position of Vinegar-hill. Whether or not their alleged motive for the movement was their true one, no better ground could have been chosen by means of which to guard against surprise from an advancing foe. For, full ten miles off, in any direction, the smallest column of troops might easily be descried in motion.

Morning shone clear on the insurgent concourse. The commanders had got together on the very summit of the hill, and in a strife of voices, each straining his lungs to exceed the general din, they flatly contradicted one another's statements, or, without attending to any reasons offered, opposed one another's plans, merely that each might advise and guide alone. Petty leaders, with eyes flashing as impetuously, and with a gesticulation as abrupt, as those whom they had themselves consented to call Generals, endeavoured to insist upon their own shallow or interested views. From the subaltern crowd, who, unsummoned, thronged around, there came additional intrusions upon the propriety of debate; every peasant who had left an unprotected cabin behind him, clamorously urging a diversion in its favour. Nay, serious differences occurred between the leaders highest in influence, upon similar, or nearly similar views. Each imagined it the very best and wisest course to proceed to the immediate conquest of his own native town or village, in which, or adjacent to which,—apart from the vanity of

display amongst old friends, as a victorious patriot general—lay the cause of his zeal; namely, the property, little or great, most worthy in his eyes, of national guardianship. And as no two of the council of war came from the same district, their opinions regarding the next most worthy object of attack were necessarily as far asunder as the places of their birth or of their residence. In a word, their discussion was little better than the obstreperous altercation of a mob.

After the lapse of many hours, during which no one measure had been unanimously agreed upon, the tired or impatient peasants began to form, like different swarms of bees, into distinct bodies, and to proceed in whatever distinct routes whim or undisciplined desire suggested. Of these throngs, some were miles away, some less distant; but a very small portion of the original concourse remained upon Vinegar-hill, when a shout was heard from an insignificant party, who had gone to dally and waver on the Wexford road. The band, still on the rocky eminence, caught up this shout: others, departing in different directions, echoed it, until it was sent faintly back by the most remote throngs. All instantly returned, pell-mell, to reassume their abandoned position, and to discover why it was they rent the air with their own outcries.

Here we arrive at an explanation of the nature and results of the wise negotiations with the insurgents, of the authorities of Wexford.

Hasty and random measures had indeed been taken to barricade the entrances into the town through the old gateway arches. Yet, during the irresolute and impotent councils of "the ginerals" and "the capt'ns" on Vinegar-hill, which awe of the garrison of Wexford considerably embarrassed, still more impotent and wavering were the councils of that very garrison and of its loyal citizen-adherents. It was at last resolved, in the absence of a single direct manifestation of hostility, to send a friendly deputation to the insurgents, in order to dissuade them from farther outrage. Three gentlemen of the county, arrested the previous day on suspicion of disloyalty—and who had been imprisoned along with the despairing Sir William Judkin—were selected for the purpose. And it was the arrival of these ambassadors amongst the peasant-crowd on the Wexford road which caused, first, the single shout, and next the successive roars that pealed as a rallying-cry to the almost disbanded force of the Croppies.

The negotiators from the terrified military and people of Wexford delivered their commission. But when, by it, the insurgents understood that they were deemed formidable enough to fill with

apprehension those whom they had dreaded to encounter, the resolution to attack the town was naturally and instantaneously formed. There had not been a single voice amongst the deliberators of Wexford sufficiently influential to enforce the every-day truth, that, between two antagonists, admission of weakness by the one is strength conferred upon the other.

Two of the ambassadors were sent back to communicate the resolution which was so promptly taken. The third was forcibly detained by his own neighbours and tenantry, and nominated to a general's command over themselves. That night, the again concentrated and reinforced insurgents, now not less than forty thousand in number, assumed a new position, within three miles of the threatened town. Still, according to their usual custom, choosing a barren elevation, which overlooked, with a shattered and peaky front, the way they must take, and where three large masses of shivered grey stone, more prominent than the others, gave to the place the name of "The Three Rocks." Here, awaiting the day-dawn to light them to the object of destined attack, the vast multitude of men, women, and children, passed the short summer's night, without other covering than the starry skies;—stretching themselves to sleep in a stone-strewn hollow, which ran behind the brow of the splintered eminence that beetled over the road.

Sir William Judkin, prisoner as he continued to be, could not remain unaware of the panic which now possessed the garrison and people of Wexford. Its manifestation, in detail, it was impossible, indeed, he should observe. The weeping and quaking mother, sent to droop over her children; the general movement of shutting up the houses, either that the inhabitants might unseen, and without fear of intrusion, secrete their portable property or ready money, or offer to an unruly enemy the feeble barrier of a closed door: the streets, abandoned to the military, whose looks of precipitation and doubt argued any thing but a hope of success in the approaching conflict—these signs, indeed, he could not see. Nor could he note, that with such citizens as remained about, there was frequently cold greeting between those who had been good neighbours, on the mutual svspicion, that they might meet as enemies in the coming strife. While, perhaps, one hurried to seek a hiding-place, or arrange for flight, and the other to prepare the concealed arm she had treasured up for the coming crisis, and to chuckle over them in foretaste of a long-vowed revenge against the very man he had just encountered. These symptoms, and many such as these, of the public agitation around him, Sir

William was interdicted from noticing. But, in the faces even of his jailers, he read distinctly, after the return to Wexford of the ambassadors, the fear of death, or of the loss of property, deemed inevitable at the hands of the infuriated foe, who, but the previous day, had in a great degree rifled, and partly burned down, the adjacent town of Enniscorthy, and piked, without mercy, every obnoxious person that fell into their power. Recollecting the feelings formerly noticed in Sir William, with reference to the question of the probable success of the insurgents in an attack upon the town, his newly-acquired hopes may easily be imagined by the reader.

The progress of events, which he could not follow, we are obliged to trace for him.

Few of the inhabitants of Wexford retired to repose upon the night of his arrest. The whole garrison remained under arms, But as the watchword of continued safety passed from sentinel to sentinel, it often changed, notwithstanding its literal import, into a cadence which well might seem to argue the approach of the enemy.

Yet hope had not yet quite fled the breasts of the military and citizens. An express, promising succour to Wexford, arrived during the evening, from a general officer, who, at the first intelligence of the sudden cry to war in the County of Wexford, had set off from the Fort of Duncannon, in the contiguous County of Waterford. It was not till daybreak that the friends to whom he had pledged his services, learned how incompetent to redeem the pledge this commander proved to be.

Either insensible of the now formidable foe he had to encounter, or incapable of judicious measures, he had left Duncannon almost alone, purposing to meet, at a village eight miles distant from the threatened town, some militia and cannon, while his main force was to follow in his route. Upon the night previous to the attack on Wexford, he gained the point of rendezvous; the militia had not come up, and he retired to rest. But while he enjoyed his sleep, they arrived: unconscious of his presence in the hamlet, and supposing him in advance, they pushed on. Some time after day-dawn, they were espied by the insurgents winding down a hilly road to the left of their position. Overwhelming numbers poured down from the rocky eminence. One officer and a score of privates of the military became prisoners: the rest were slain almost before they could be aware of their danger. The ammunition they guarded accidentally blew up during the contest; but, besides the arms of the killed and the captive, the shouting victors now dragged up their high encampment two small pieces of cannon.

The general, thus taken napping, learned, when he awoke, the fate of this detachment. His main force had, however, come up, and in time perhaps to have revenged their comrades and assisted Wexford. But, ordering them to retreat, he left Wexford to assist itself, and fled precipitately the way he had advanced.

A force destined to co-operate with this injudicious or unhappy commander, supposed to be still advancing, marched out of Wexford to make a diversion in his favour. One of its officers, pushing on to reconnoitre, was shot at long distance by a Shelmalier. Upon his death ensued the rapid retreat into garrison of the body he had in part commanded.

It was resolved to evacuate Wexford. Two fresh negotiators were sent out to make terms with the dreaded foe. Full and unmolested possession of the town was tendered, provided the insurgents would stipulate to spare life and property. This condition the leaders haughtily refused, unless, after the departure of the garrison, their arms, ammunition, and accoutrements, should be found in the barracks by the besiegers. While the ambassadors went back with their answer, the insurgents hotly followed in their footsteps.

In about an hour afterwards, Sir William Judkin, listening, along with his brother captives, to every sound, great and little, that could reach them from abroad, heard a shout, so faint that it must have come from a distance. Yet its character was that of one emitted continuously by thousands of human throats. Appalled silence at first answered it in the town. But anon, shrieks, shrill and despairing, mixed with all the gradually rising clamour of precipitate flight and confusion, responded to its repeated challenge. As the invaders came near, the two previously distinct uproars merged into one. Then, by degrees, intense cheers of mad exultation rising over every other sound—gained at length sole and tremendous mastery. The cheers rang nearer and nearer to Sir William's prison-walls, burst around them and above them, like—if it could be—shrill thunder. And amid the clang of shivered bolt and bar, of answering shouts under the same roof with him, of stamping and rushing, and roaring along vaulted passages and through echoing dungeons—Sir William, his own lungs almost frantically adding to thedin, his own rush and bound not less uncontrolled than that of any ecstatic insurgent or liberated captive around him—Sir William was again free!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Some of the meaner of the enlarged captives flung up their hats and mingled with their liberators: others of more consideration were hailed with fantic greetings, and clamorously appointed to the dignity of leaders. Sir William, after the first effusion of his own wild joy, seemed to become equally insensible to the yells that still pealed around him, and to the furious action by which, exuberant at all times as is the impassioned gesticulation of the Irish peasant, the victors manifested their sense of continued success.

Having crossed the threshold of his prison, he stood aside, his back leaning against its wall, a moody and uninterested man amidst the exultation of thousands. He was solely self-occupied in endeavouring to shape out some course by which his enfranchisement might be made serviceable to his private views. Hasty accounts, of yesterday's proceedings interchanged between his late fellow-prisoners and their liberators, rapid allusions to the state of the town, to the sudden flight towards Ross of its garrison, and some of its inhabitants, and of others towards the ships in the harbour; all this was lost upon his ear. One only sentence, uttered by a friendly citizen, caught his attention. The man spoke of Sir Thomas Hartley's death, and went on to mention that, in the course of the day, his carriage had arrived in Wexford, strongly guarded by a body of yeomen, and that, at the door of a particular house, a lady, closely veiled and muffled, had descended from it. Sir William sprang to the speaker, seized his arm, drew him apart, and learned the name of the proprietor of the house spoken of. Then, no longer inactive, he pushed through the throng, one sole object engaging his mind.

To the wild confusion around he still remained indifferent. If, during his furious progress through the obstructed streets, a door was battered in, and a faint shriek succeeded to the crash, he heard or regarded it not. A miserable fugitive, winged by the fear of a shocking death, had gained some advance of his pursuers; he flung himself at Sir William's feet, and with upturned face of supplicating despair, and with burning, starting eyes, piteously claimed his protection. He but stooped to unloose from his knees the wretch's grasping hands—and to hurl him to his executioners, muttering—"Talbot, were it you!"—and so pursued his way.

But a more serious incident, in which he was obliged to bear a part, caused farther interruption to his career.

The Insurgents had stipulated that life and property should be spared, provided the arms, ammunition, and accoutrements of the garrison, were left behind. But the garrison had abandoned the town so precipitately as, in many instances, to abandon, at the same time their wives and children—before the return, even of their own envoys: consequently they could not comply with terms which they would not tarry to learn. The invading throng, disappointed of the expected spoils, which, above all others, they valued, declared that faith was broken towards the Wexford army of liberty. The black passions of the multitude, that in a degree had been tamed by the pride of conscious predominance, and by exhortations from the leaders to uphold, in its dignity, the high character of conquerors, began, like the first tossing of the waters beneath the scourge of the tempest, to lash each other with a fury wh ch threatened fearful results.

A street, through which Sir William must necessarily pass, was densely blocked up by the wrathful concourse. As he joined their outskirts, they had begun to give signs of this dangerous mood, and three or four leaders, headed by "Father General Rourke," springing into energy, called on him to assist in allaying the storm. They well knew, that if once fully let loose, it would be as difficult to conciliate the full violence of the ocean-rage, to which we have likened its symptoms.

Chiefly for the purpose of scattering the throng, through whose wedged array he could not hope to penetrate, Sir William answered the claim made upon him, and followed Rourke into the midst of the raging people, exerting himself, as all the other leaders did, to produce the much-desired result. But by none of their commanders were the multitude so effectually swayed as by the clerical captain, as, with the accost of rude, authoritative intrepidity, he rode boldly amongst them—sparing, when advice and explanation failed, neither spiritual anathema, nor more substantial blows. All quailed beneath his voice or arm: Wexford, on the point of destruction, was saved. Afterwards, indeed, some houses, deserted, closed up, and therefore showing a face of inhospitality, were broken open and pillaged; as were also some belonging to persons who had been marked down as notorious enemies to the Insurgent cause. A few lives were sacrificed to individual hate or ferocity; but, although upon every side reigned utter turbulence, injury to property or life was partial, and by no means to the extent that might be feared from a host of revengeful men, masters over all, and armed with the full power to do mischief. And here, let us add

a fact, which, in the estimation of every candid inquirer into human nature, must throw a redeeming ray of grace around the blackest crimes perpetrated in hasty vengeance by the Irish Insurgents of 1798. During their moments of maddest licentiousness, neither in the town or county of Wexford, nor in any other town or county over which insurrection spread its blaze, was woman's honour once outraged. Nor, excepting in one peculiar and fearful instance was female blood shed!

But, after Sir William's escape through the dispersing throng, the house to which he forced his way, proved to be one of those marked out for destruction, as belonging to a yeoman Captain, who had been distinguished for "activity," as it was called, "previous to the rising." To add to his fears at this intelligence, he further learned, ere he could make way past the threshold, that, surely anticipating the fate which awaited him, its proprietor, like the innkeeper at Enniscorthy, had fled from Wexford before the arrival of the Insurgents, and left all the females of his family to the mercy of those he most dreaded.

"An' they 're before you, in the house, if you want 'em, Gineral," added his informant.

Through an astounding jumble of crash and vociferation in the lower part of the house, Sir William sprang up-stairs, and burst his way into the principal room. Here was but a continuation of the scene he had escaped from below. Windows were shattered, furniture was dashed to pieces and flung out through them into the street. Mingled with the shout of fury came the shout of merriment: the wildest act of destruction, in accordance with the hidden character of the Irish peasant, often producing the heartiest laugh. Hidden we have called that character, and it is so. Its minor traits, indeed, such as appear in every-day intercourse, any one may catch. But owing to a long habit of abstraction, banishment even from all interchange of social thought or feeling with those ranking above him, the real moral elements that form character—the impulses of the heart, the mental workings which end in impulse—these secrets of his inner heart, the Irish peasant keeps concealed to the present hour, as well from the oppressors he hates, as from the friends who, if they knew him better, could better serve him.

Sir William's eye lighted on a man he had before seen in almost a similar situation. It was no other than the individual who had sold him his own miniature and his bride's gloves and wedding-ring, in the inn at Enniscorthy. Here again this person seemed to be the presiding genius in the work of pillage. With a heavy hammer he

battered at a chest of drawers; and ere, one by one, he tossed out the contents of each drawer to his crowding followers, he might be observed to run his own hand, with much stealthy dexterity, through the valuable articles, and sometimes to steal it, unseen, to his pocket.

"Sparables for the cratures o' women, boys!" he said, emptying a drawer-full of feminine finery upon the floor. There was a laughing strife for shares of the prize: then the drawer was shivered to pieces, and cast into the street.

"An' here—the poor Capt'n provides shirts for Croppies, boys," flinging down another, filled with the useful matters he had mentioned.

Sir William darted upon him, and clutched him tight.

"Asy, now, asy, neighbour!" cried the fellow.

"How have you disposed of the ladies of this house, rascal?"

"Pike the life out o' the Orangeman!" was the cry around, as the crowd deemed they saw their temporary leader violently assaulted by an enemy.

"I'm not Orange, friends—I fought for you at Enniscorthy,' said Sir William.

"Hould off—hould off! his honour spakes the truth," expostulated the man. "Many's the one I hard say it—I know him to-day though I didn't know him yestherday."

The appeal produced peace. The speaker resumed, quietly turning to his captor, who still held him secure—"An' is it about the poor ladies your honour is axin?"

"Yes, yes! Where are they?—Safe—safe—or I will shoot you where you stand!"

"Oh, then, if that's all, safe enough they are. Only they were runnin' here an' there; an' just to keep 'em out o' harum, I've put 'em snug an' cozy into one crib together."

"What do you mean, fellow?—Explain, this instant!"

"Asy, now, your honour. Don't be too fraptious, all out, wid a body. You were free enough in Enniscorthy, wid your mokuses, only for a lady's glove, an' a lady's ring. Will you give nothin' at all to the boy that maybe 'ill help you to the weeny hand and the weeny finger, that wears the both?"

Sir William almost emptied his purse into the horny palm of the mercenary knight,—adding, that if he found himself trifled with, he would take signal vengeance.

"Oh, never fear! We'll gi' you pick an' choose of all in the house, at laste. Come, your honour, I'll bring you to the very door o' the cage."

"Lead on, Sir, I'll follow you—ay, to the world's end, if you deceive me."

"Well, your honour, sure it'll only be ketch him who can, betuxt us."

But Sir William's doubts were unnecessary: his guide had stated but the facts. Having ascertained, with yells of baffled revenge, the timely flight of the yeoman Captain, the Insurgents, venting their rage solely upon his property, had driven the ladies of the house into a garret room. While the work of plunder and devastation went on below, they had been there locked in, unmolested at their hands, save by the party execrations which would have been lavished upon Saint Bridget, or any other female saint in the calendar, if she or any one of them were an Orangewoman.

The man unlocked and flung the door open, and with a chuckling laugh hastily returned to a scene of more interest. Sir William saw four ladies in the room, who, at his appearance, started from trembling terror into still greater horror. His eye scanned the group. One seemed the lady of the house; two others, her daughters; the fourth was not his wife, but Miss Alicia Hartley.

The pallid faces, the clasped hands, the crouching postures, and the beseeching eyes of the three first-mentioned ladies, conveyed no meaning to Sir William Judkin. His wife did not appear—he comprehended nothing else.

As he stood motionless at the door, Miss Alicia, seated on the floor, at one side, and supporting her back against the wall, seemingly in an exhausted state, slowly recognised him and pronounced his name. He sprang to her.

"Where is Eliza, madam?—where is she?" growing impatient of the old lady's tearful silence, as he bent over her.

"Oh, Sir William!" answered the suffering Miss Alicia, "I wish I could inform you!"

"And you cannot, madam!"

"Alas! no;—if I could—kneeling, as you do, before me,—" for in his eagerness he had dropped on his knees before her—"so like one now no more——"

"Absurd, madam!" he cried with roughness. "Surely this at least you can answer—where did you part from her?—when?"

"I have not seen my poor child since about ten o'clock yester evening."

"Eternal powers!" Sir William exclaimed, as he sprang to his feet. "How?—where?—in what manner were you separated?—And could you leave her side, Miss Alicia Hartley? Could you leave

her unprotected? You must account with me, madam, why you have done this!" His eyes turned in fierce rage even upon the helpless object stretched beneath them.

"Heaven can witness!" answered the trembling old lady, in bitter and terrified anguish, "I am sufficiently wretched, without the additional misery of your anger, Sir William. It is not necessary, indeed it is not, to overwhelm me. Grant me fortitude, O my God! to bear my sufferings as a Christian should!"

"But your answer, madam!"

"I will, I will, Sir William. Do not look so fiercely on me, and I will answer you;—as well, at least, as my shattered and distracted recollection enables me. Oh! dismal, bleak, and pitiful, are now my recollections of all the past. Oh, my poor brother!—oh, Thomas, Thomas!—The Lord strengthen me! the Lord pity me!" and she relapsed into a feeble paroxysm of weeping, from which Sir William, at length somewhat moved, refrained to rouse her.

But finally, in broken words, half of sorrowful ejaculation, and of continued prayers to Heaven for the strength she was but too conscious of not possessing, Miss Alicia began to recount the occurrences of the previous night.

Some time after she and her niece had arrived in Enniscorthy, while they were weeping together, and starting at every sound, in expectation of the arrival of a messenger dispatched to gather tidings of the proceedings at the castle, when a tall woman entered the apartment.

"A tall woman, madam!" her listener broke in, with a start. "Did you remark her features?"

"No; they were either hidden from me, or else my dim eyes could not observe them at the distance at which she stood."

Sir William made a gesture of impatience.

"Well, madam?"

"This unannounced visitant requested a private interview with Miss Hartley, who seemed willing to grant it. I was excluded from their conference. They spoke together a considerable time. At her departure I found our Eliza much agitated by some new feelings. She told me that the woman had been the bearer of a letter from her Father."

"From her Father, Miss Alicia?"

"Alas! yes! And though, at the moment, this allayed my doubts and fears, I have since but too truly become aware that the alleged letter must have been a forgery. For scarce did I arrive

in this house, when the people informed me that; at the time it was said to have been written, my poor Brother was—was not alive to write it."

Sir William underwent the test of a fresh fit of weeping.

"The woman also pretended to bear to my dear child a letter from you, Sir William."

"The Devil, madam!"

"Though I need not ask you if this, too, was not a base forgery."

"I certainly did send her a note, Madam. But as certainly not by such a messenger. The keeper of Enniscorthy prison promised, for a bribe, to forward it."

"Well, this note came to our Eliza's hand—if, indeed, it was the same you sent—"

"Mine was written with a pencil."

"So was this, for I read it."

The old lady continued to say that the contents of the other letter were withheld from her by Eliza. That, some time after, overcome by grief and feebleness, she had sunk into a slumber, upon awaking from which her niece was not to be seen; nor had Miss Alicia since heard of her.

With respect to her own appearance in Wexford, she proceeded to say, that, after a night spent in vain inquiries and laments, the person to whom she ascribed all her misfortunes, namely, Captain Harry Talbot, had abruptly presented himself before her. That, not able to speak her fear or horror of him, she had fainted away. That, regaining her senses, she found herself in the family carriage, rapidly driven along, she knew not whither, and closely guarded by yeomen. That, entering Wexford, the vehicle had stopped at the door of the house in which she at present was. That the gentleman and lady of the house received her kindly, as a charge they had expected. That, immediately on her arrival amongst them, she had been compelled to take to her bed. Whence, an hour ago, the invasion of the cruel rebels had rendered her uprise a matter of necessity.

No farther information could Sir William obtain from the shocked and enfeebled old lady. And this, though not enough in one sense, was too much in another. If he had previously entertained any doubt as to the present position of his bride, he now became certain that she must be sought only at the hands of Talbot.

Indifferent to Miss Alicia's piteous entreaties for protection, he rushed out of the house, into the still crowded and uproarious street. Conscious of a confused stupor of brain, his first wish was

to shun the riot and the throngs around him, and to escape for a time to some silent spot, where, flinging himself on the earth, in the open, free air, his mind might grow cool enough to arm him with deliberate thought and purpose.

Yet, while he roughly pushed through all the obstruction in the crowded streets, he only experienced a return, in increased force, of the impulse before felt, to seek out Talbot in the very face of peril and death, to clutch him by the throat, demand his wife, and then—kill him, and tread upon him. Nor did this seem difficult to the feverish mind of the young Baronet. He would be more cunning and wary than he had before been. He would disguise his features; he would assume a yeoman's uniform—thus he might easily gain access to Talbot's haunts. Once found, he would drag him into some private place, and then—he actually bounded at his own fancied picture of the encounter.

Absorbed by the greedy longing for revenge, he continued to hurry on, when some one caught him by the arm. Fiercely turning to resent the interruption, he recognised Father Rourke. The face of the reverend warrior, except where perspiration had forced a distinct way, was fearfully blotched and stained; his lips were parched; his voice sounded hoarse and exhausted. Altogether he appeared as a man who had undergone extreme toil, but yet whose constitution would not yield to toil of the severest kind.

"Whither so fast, my young soldier?"

"You know already, Sir!—To seek out that traitor-villain, Talbot! To seek and find him, if he be on the surface of the earth!" It seemed, as if by this desperate expression of his purpose, or rather of his impulse, he had fixed himself in his wild resolve.

"You have not yet got back the poor little wife from him, then?"

Sir William scowled and stamped his reply.

"Well! Suppose I can direct you where at least to meet him?"

"Is he in town!—secured!"

"No. Yet is he in the hands of those who will make him answer your questions. For, if my eye did not deceive me, I saw him, upon our way to Wexford, taken prisoner, at the head of a smal number of his poor yeomen, and marched to our stationary camp on Vinegar Hill."

"You are sure, Sir?"

"Not downright positive, so as to make oath of the thing. But the prisoner certainly was a yeoman officer, in the uniform of his corps, and Talbot I am morally sure it was."

"Bless you, bless you, good friend! I will set off after him this moment."

"Had you not better take some rest and refreshment before you go?"

"Rest and refreshment! with this before me?—Where shall I find a horse, Father Rourke?"

"By the life, man, as I told you before, I am General Rourke now."

"Well—General Rourke—can you help me to a horse?"

"Why, yes, I think I can. Or sure you may easily help yourself: few stables in Wexford but are open to you, I believe."

"Good-day, then—"

"Oh, a good-day to you, lad," replied the clerical hero, gazing in some wonder after Sir William, as, at the hint of his honest friend, he proceeded to possess himself of a steed by means which, under other circumstances, might have been termed horse-stealing. "A pair of bright eyes for your patriotism, after all!" continued General Rourke, with a smile and a shake of the head.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHAT Father Rourke has just said, as well as some former remarks we have ourselves made, will lead the reader to expect the following information.

After the great mass of the Insurgents abandoned their position on Vinegar Hill, to advance upon Wexford—(which, as we have seen, was yielded to them without a struggle)—a considerable number, attached to their cause, still remained on the rocky eminence, ostensibly as a garrison to guard the conquered town below, but really to shun the chance of open fighting, or else to gratify a malignant nature. We might indeed say, that all who acted upon either of the motives mentioned, were influenced by both. For it is generally true, that the bravest man is the least cruel, the coward most so. That he who hesitates not to expose himself in a fair field, will yet hesitate to take life treacherously, coolly, or at a disproportioned advantage over his opponent. While the boastful craven, who shrinks from following in his footsteps, glories to show a common zeal in the same cause, by imbruing his hands in the

blood of the already conquered, of the weak, or of the defenceless.

Apart from the new recruits that continued to come in to the popular place of rendezvous, the majority of the executioners and butchers of Vinegar Hill were, according to the accounts of living chroniclers on both sides of the question, individuals of this last kind. Amongst them, indeed, were some who, if peculiar outrages had not temporarily roused their revenge to a maddening thirst for blood, would never have brutalized themselves, and shamed the nature they bore, by participation in such deeds as were done upon the breezy summit of that fatal hill. But these were outnumbered by their brethren of a different character; men, demons rather, to be found in all communities, whose natural disposition was murderous, and who, but for the coward fear of retributive justice, would spill blood upon the very hearthstone of household peace. Alas for our boasted nature, when such beings share it!

At the head of the main force, all the principal or more respectable leaders had necessarily taken their departure from "the camp." The so-called leaders, who remained in nominal command over the skulking mob we have described; were themselves scarce raised above the scum and dregs who, for a recognised similarity of character, rather than for any merit, chose them as their "capt'ns." And by these men were conducted or despatched, during the previous night and day, different bands, in different directions, to seize on provisions, to drive in cattle and sheep, and to lead captive to the rendezvous all whom they might deem enemies to the cause of what was now pompously styled—poor, brave little Peter Rooney's heart jumping at the sound—"The Waxford Army of Liberty."

Accordingly, sheep, cows, oxen, and Orangemen, or supposed Orangemen, had, previous to Sir William Judkin's approach to the hill, been abundantly provided for the satiety of the only two cravings felt by their ferocious captors. Such of the former as could not immediately be devoured, were suffered to ramble among the rocks and patches of parched grass on the side of the eminence, until hunger again called for a meal: such of the latter as, from whim or fatigue, were not summarily despatched, were thrust into a prison—a singular one—until revenge, or murder, again roared for its victims.

On the summit of the height stood a roofless, round building, originally intended for a windmill, but never perfected, because, perhaps, in the middle of the projector's work, it became tardily evident to him, that the river at his feet supplied a better impetus for

grinding corn than was to be gained from the fitful breeze, after mounting up the side of the steep hill. In Ireland such buildings rarely occur, inasmuch as, in almost in every district, the river or the rill invites the erection of the more diligent water-wheel. Indeed, we have heard that the half-finished pile in question was the first thought of an English settler, accustomed to such structures in his own country, and subsequently abandoned for the reasons already mentioned.

But, at the time of our story, this roofless round tower, about seven paces in diameter, and perhaps twenty-five feet in height, was appropriated to a use very different from that for which it had been planned. It served, in fact, as a temporary prison for the unfortunate persons captured by the marauding garrison of Vinegar Hill. Many were the victims thrust through its narrow doorway to meet a horrid death on the pikes of the savages abroad.

Never, before or since, in Ireland, did the summer sun dart fiercer rays than, as if in sympathy with the passions and acts it witnessed, during the hot struggle of civil war in the year 1798. As Sir William Judkin spurred his jaded, smoking horse towards the eminence, beast and rider were faint with heat and toil.

It may be supposed, that a bridegroom, if young, love-stricken, and of an ardent nature, will sleep little upon the eve of his wedding-day; that a thousand sweet thoughts—but this is not the time to image forth the blissful visions which must chase sleep from his pillow. Yet more surely will the furious working of strong passions—of disappointed love—devouring rage—and thirsty vengeance, cause nature to spurn at the thought of slumber. And these things considered, it will appear that for the last three nights, and up to the evening of the present day, Sir William could have enjoyed little rest.

And yet nature was not quite exhausted in him, but rather, in obedience to the stern mandate of his will, summoned strength for a last effort.

His horse, although stretching every muscle at the goad of his bloody spur, could but creep with distended nostril and bursting eye against the steep and rock-encumbered acclivity. Impatient of the animal's tardy progress, Sir William sprang, with an imprecation, from his back, and pushed upward; drenched indeed in perspiration at every step, yet with a constancy and a nerve scarce to be accounted for, unless that his heated brain gave him such stimulus as imparts incredible strength to the maniac. He gained a view of the old windmill-tower. Upon its top was hoisted

a rude flag of sun-faded green, on which, in clumsy white letters, had been inscribed "Liberty or Death." Had the breeze been brisk enough to float the banner to its full extent, such were the words that would have met the eye. But the summer-breeze had fled the summit of Vinegar Hill, leaving that baleful flag to droop over the scene beneath it, until within its heavy folds the word "Liberty" became hidden, and "Death" alone was visible.

His banner it might indeed well appear to be—drooping, in appropriate listlessness, as it flaunted the name of the destroyer above the havoc he had made.—For, just below the base of the tower, the rocks and the burnt grass were reddened, and lifeless bodies, frightfully gashed, lay here and there, some fully to be seen, others partly concealed by the stunted furze and shrubs.

Sir William still toiled upward. In different places along the hill-side, and even at some distance beyond its foot, were groups of men, women, and children,—some reposing after fatigue, others seated round blazing fires of wood and furze. The slaughtered carcasses of sheep and cows often lay in close neighbourhood with the mortal remains of their enemies. And the houseless Croppy, when necessitated by hunger, hacked a piece from the plundered animal he had killed, held it on his pike-head before the blaze, and when thus inartificially cooked, either stretched his rude spit, still holding the morsel on its point, to some member of his family, or voraciously devoured it himself. Even here, amongst these houseless and friendless people—none, we would add, of the ferocious garrison of the windmill prison, but rather some poor wanderers from a burnt cabin, recently come in—even amongst these, surrounded by sights of horror, and stifling their hunger in this almost savage manner, national characteristics were not beaten down. The laugh was frequent, as the cook made some droll remark upon the novelty of his occupation, or the excellence of the fare; the words deriving half their import from his tone and manner as he perhaps said—"Well! it's nate mate, considherin' Orange sheep;"—or—"By gonnies! Orange is the Croppy's friend, an' who'll deny it?"—holding the broiled flesh high on his pike:—"Sure it's no other than a friend 'ud feed fat sheep for a body;—open your mouths an' shet your eyes. Now, boys an' girls—the biggest mouth 'ill have this undher the teeth, I'm thinkin'." And they gaped and laughed loud, as, with a grave face, the examiner went round to decide on the comparative width of each yawning cavern.

There were carousing groups too, sending illicit whiskey, or other more legal liquor, from hand to hand; and the beverage did not

fail of its enlivening effect. And leaders appeared, with green ribands, or perhaps a military sash around their persons, or epaulettes on their shoulders, torn from officers they had slain. These were busy inspecting different bands of insurgents as they practised their pike exercise; now driving forward the weapon at a given object; now darting it over their shoulders as if to meet a foe from behind; now adroitly grasping it at either end with both hands, and bringing into play the elastic staff, as, with great dexterity, they whirled it round their persons, to keep off an attack in front. Through all arose loud vociferations, each directing the other, according as he arrived, or fancied he had arrived, at greater proficiency than his neighbour.

Sir William's attention was at length riveted upon the particular throng who, variously occupied, surrounded the narrow entrance to the old tower. With furious action and accents, the clamorous crowd here hustled together, and a first glance told that their present occupation brought into energy all the ferociousness of their nature.

Some of them, who were on horseback, waved their arms, and endeavoured to raise their voices over the din of those around, who, however, vociferated too ardently to listen to their words. While all looked on at the slaughter committed by a line of pikemen drawn up before the tower, whose weapons were but freed from one victim to be plunged into another, it was not merely a shout of triumph, but the more deadly yell of glutted vengeance, or malignity, which, drowning the cry of agony that preceded it, burst, with little intermission, from all.

Two sentinels, armed with muskets, guarded the low and narrow entrances to the temporary prison, and grimly did they scowl on the crowded captives pent up within its walls. Another man, gaunt and robust in stature, having a horseman's sword buckled awkwardly at his hip, a green ribbon tied round his foxy felt hat, the crimson sash of a slain militia officer knotted round his loins, two large pistols thrust into it, and a formidable pike in his hand, rushed, from time to time, into the tower, dragged forth some poor victim, and put him to a short examination. Then, unless something were urged in favour of the destined sufferer, sufficient to snatch him from the frightful fate numbers had already met, he flung him to his executioners. And this man, so furious, so savage, and so remorseless, was Shawn-a-Gow.

Armed also with a musket, and stationed between the line of emen and the door of the tower, in order that he might be the

first agent of vengeance, stood the ill-favoured scoundrel we have mentioned in a former chapter—the murderous Murtoch Kane, late a "stable-boy" at the inn of Enniscorthy. As he levelled at his victim, proud of the privilege of anticipating his brother-executioners, the ruffian's brow ever curled into the murderer's scowl.

The hasty interrogatories proposed to each cringing captive by Shawn-a-Gow, midway between the tower and the pikemen, had exclusive reference to the religious creed of the party. The acknowledgment of Protestantism, deemed synonymous with Orangeism, at once proclaimed, or rather was assumed as proclaiming, a deadly enemy, meriting instant vengeance. Yet in this, the rabble-insurgents of Vinegar Hill acted with a curious inconsistency. Many Protestants held command in the main force of which they called themselves adherents; nay, the individual selected by unanimous choice as "Commander-in-Chief," was of the established religion of the State. But why pause to point out any departure from principle in the persons of such men as are before us? Were their deeds to be justly visited on the more courageous as well as more numerous bodies of the insurgents, we might indeed occupy ourselves with the question.

Panting and nearly fainting, Sir William Judkin gained the tower, and, ere he could address a question to those around, stood still to recover his breath. Two prisoners were dragged forth by the relentless Shawn-a-Gow.

"Are you a Christian?" he demanded, glaring into the face of one trembling wretch, as he grasped him by the collar.

"I am, Jack Delouchery," he was answered.

"Are you a right Christian?"

"I am a Protestent."

"Ay—the Orange."

"No, not an Orangeman."

"Now, hould silence, you dog! every mother's son o' ye is Orange to the backbone. Is there any one here to say a word for this Orangeman?"

There was an instant's silence, during which the pale, terror-stricken man gazed beseechingly upon every dark and ominous face around him. But the cry, "Pay him his reckonin'," soon sealed the victim's doom. With a fierce bellow, the words, "Ay, we'll weed the land o' ye—we'll have only one way;—we'll do to every murtherer o' ye what ye'd do to us!"—was the furious sentence of the smith, as he pitched him forward. Murtoch Kane shot, and a dozen pikes did the rest.

The smith seized the second man. One of the lookers-on started forward, claimed him as a friend, and told some true or feigned story of his interference previous to the insurrection, between Orange outrage and its victims. He was flung to his patron by Shawn-a-Gow, with the carelessness of one who presided over life and death: the same savage action tossing the all but dead man into life, which had hurled the previous sufferer into eternity.

Sir William Judkin, as the smith again strode to the door of the prison, came forward, with the question ready to burst from his chopped and parched lips, when the man whose name he would have mentioned, already in the gripe of Shawn, was dragged forth into view.

The Baronet stepped back. His manner changed from its fiery impetuosity. He now felt no impulse to bound upon a prey escaping from his hands. In the Gow's iron grasp, and in the midst of a concourse of sworn enemies, the devoted Talbot stood closely secured. Either to indulge the new sensation of revenge at last gratified, or compose himself to a purpose that required system in its execution, Sir William stood motionless, darting from beneath his black brows arrowy glances upon his rival, his breathing, which recently had been the pant of anxiety, altered into the long-drawn respiration of resolve.

Captain Talbot appeared despoiled of his military jacket, his helmet, his sash, and all the other tempting appendages of warlike uniform, which long ago had been distributed amongst the rabble commanders of "the camp." No man can naturally meet death with a smile: it is affectation even in the hero that assumes it; it is bravado, on other lips, to hide a quaking heart. To smile in the face of death was the vanity of consistency in the Stoic, because his disciples were looking on with their stiles and tablets to minute his last words and conduct to posterity: had he been bleeding to death in a desert, the echoes of solitude would have made answer to his moans. Even He who triumphed over death, and whose example must teach how to die, as well as how to live, prayed that the bitter cup might pass away: even the consolations of His religion will but serve to clothe the features with resignation to the loss of life. But, particularly in the event of a sudden and terrible summons from existence, hero and coward, saint and sinner, must present alike, to the approach of the dread summoner, though perhaps in different degrees of expression, an eye of horror, and a pallid cheek. And Captain Talbot, whatever might have been the strength and the secrets of his heart, as he instictively shrank from

the rude arm of Shawn-a-Gow, was pale and trembling, and his glance was that of dread.

Hopeless of mercy, he spoke no word, used no remonstrance; it was unavailing. Before him bristled the red pikes of his ruthless executioners; behind him stood Murtoch Kane, cocking his musket. The grasp that dragged him along told at once the determination and the strength of the infuriated giant.

"There's a dozen o' ye, I'm sure!" sneered Shawn: "I'll stand out to spake for Sir Thomas Hartley's hangman." The tone of bitter, savage mockery in which he spoke, grated at Talbot's ear, as first grinning into his prisoner's face, he glanced in fierce triumph over the crowd.

"A good pitch to him, Capt'n Delouchery," cried one of the executioners: "don't keep us waitin'; we're dhry and hungry for him." A general murmur of execration followed, and an impatient shout at the delay of vengeance.

"My undeserved death will be avenged, murderers as you are," cried the pallid Captain Talbot, in accents distinct through desperation.

Shawn-a-Gow held him at arm's length, and with an expression of mixed ferocity and amazement again stared into his face.

"An' you're callin' us murtherers, are you?" he said, after a moment's pause—"Boys! bould Croppy boys, d'ye hear him? Tell me, ar'n't you the man that stood by the gallow's foot, wid the candle in your hand, waitin' till the last gasp was sent out o' the lips o' him who often opened his dour to you, and often sat atin' and dhrinkin' wid you, under his own roof? Ar'n't you, Talbot, that man?"

No answer came from the accused.

"You don't say No to me. Ay! becase you can't! Yet you call murtherers on us. Are you here, Pat Murphy?" he roared.

"I'm here," replied the man who had before raised the first cry for instant vengeance.

"Do you know anything good this caller of names done to you?"

"It was him an' his yeomen hung the only born brother o' me."

"D'ye you hear that, *you* Murtherer? D'ye hear that, an' have you the bouldness in you to spake to us?—I'll tell you, you Orange *skibbeah!* we'll keep you up for the last. Ay, by the sowl o' my son! we'll keep you for the very last, till you're half dead wid the fear, an' till we'll have time to pay you in the way I'd glory to see, or—Come here, Murhpy! Come out, here—stand close—you ought to be first. Take your time wid him! Keep

him feeling it, as long as a poor Croppy 'ud feel the rope, when they let him down only to pull him up again."

The man stepped forward as he was ordered. Shawn-a Gow swung the struggling Captain Talbot around. With his instinctive avoidance of a terrible death, the prisoner grasped with the disengaged hand the brawny arm that held him, and being a young man of strength, clung to it in desperation—in desperation without hope. But, although he was young and strong and desperate, he opposed the sinew of a Hercules. The smith, with his single arm, dashed him backwards and forwards, until maddened by Talbot's continued clinging, and his agile recovery of his legs, at every toss Shawn's mouth foamed. He seized in his hitherto inactive hand the grasping arms of the struggler, and tore them from their hold. "Now, Murphy!" he bellowed, as Murphy couched his pike, and pushed down his hat and knit his brows to darkness. Shawn-a-Gow's right side was turned to the executioner; his black, distorted face, to the weapon upon which he should cast his victim; he stood firmly on his divided legs, in the attitude that enabled him to exert all his strength in the toss he contemplated;—when Sir William Judkin, hitherto held back by a wish perhaps to allow all vicissitudes of suffering to visit his detested rival, sternly stepped between the writhing man and his fate.

"Stop, Delouchery!" he said, in a deep, impressive voice. Before the smith could express his astonishment or rage at the interruption,—"Stop!" he said again, in higher accents; "This villain,"—scowling as he used the term of contempt—"this villain must be given into my hands—*I* must kill him!"—he hissed in a whisper close at Shawn's ear—"*I* must kill him myself!"

"Why so?" growled the smith.

"He is the murderer of my father-in-law, Sir Thomas Hartley."

"People here has just as good a right to him," answered Shawn-a-Gow surlily, much vexed at the interruption he had experienced, and scarce able to stay his hand from its impulse. "Here's Pat Murphy. He hung the only born brother of him: Murphy must have a pike through Talbot. *I* had one through Whaley!"

"And he shall. But, Delouchery, listen farther. Talbot has forced off my wife—has her concealed from me—Sir Thomas Hartley's daughter. After murdering the father, he would destroy the child—and that child my wife. Before he dies, I must force him to confess where she is to be found.—And then, Murphy and I for it, between us."

"I'll soon force out of him, for you, where the wife is."

"No, Delouchery—he will tell nothing here."

"An' where will you bring him to make him tell?"

"Only to yonder field, at the bottom of the hill."

The smith paused, and seemed resolving the proposition in all its points. He cast his eyes around. "Molloney, come here—Farrell, come here," he said. Two men advanced from the interior of the prison.

"Where's the rope that tied the Orangemen that come into the camp from Bunclody?"

"It's to the good for another job, Capt'n."

Without further explanation, he forced Captain Talbot backward into the prison; reappeared with him, his hands tied behind his back; and gave the end of the rope into Sir William Judkin's hand. Then he called Murphy aside, and, in a whisper of few words, directed him to accompany "Curnel Judkin," an' give him a helping-hand, or watch him close, as the case might seem to demand. Then turning to the Baronet, "There he's for you now: have a care an' do the business well," he said.

It would be difficult to divine what were Captain Talbot's feelings when he recognised the strange interference between him and his terrible doom. The first emphatic words addressed by Sir William Judkin to Shawn-a-Gow told nothing of his real design: they only proclaimed his wish to save his rival from immediate death. The subsequent part of the conversation between the Baronet and the smith was begun by the former in a whisper, and followed up by the latter, while he held the subject of it at arm's length, in a low, inaudible growl. So that Talbot could only suspect its import. But if his still pallid features told the secrets of his mind, he did indeed suspect the truth. Mixed with the horror which had lately been their sole expression, eager inquiry, doubt, and trembling solicitude, now alternately possessed them.

He was silent, however. By the time that he had descended the hill-side, guarded at one shoulder by his rival, who held the end of the rope which strongly tied him, and at the other by Murphy, who still clutched the weapon he had just couched for his death, the young yeoman seemed collected, too.

The last slanting rays of the setting sun shot upward against the slope of the eminence, as the victim and his escort strode down to its base. The brilliant beam that can turn to a mass of vermilion and gold the most unsightly vapour which hangs in the heavens, or fling a glowing interest over objects the most rude or uncouth in themselves, could not make less horrible the horrors of the steep hill-side.

Suddenly, the burning orb sank from view benind the distant curvings of the extensive horizon: night began to fall more appropriately to hide what the glorious summer-evening only rendered frightfully distinct.

As was generally the case amongst the insurgent multitudes, such of the occupants of the rude camp as had cabins to repair to, were now wending from the hill to pass the night under a roof. Others, and those by far the greater number, stretched themselves by some rock, or patch of furze, to sleep beneath the twinkling of the stars. The work of death ceased for a time. With an approach towards military usage, the leaders were placing sentinels at different distances, to give notice of any approach of the enemy, and imparting to them some oddly-sounding and fantastic watchword. The cooking fires sank down; comparative stillness reigned over the barren extent that had so lately sounded to the shouts of carousal, to the screams of agony, and to the fierce clamour of maddened passions.

Amid this altered aspect of the scene, Sir William Judkin and Captain Talbot entered through a gap in its fence, a lonesome field, northward from the base of Vinegar Hill. It may seem a subject for inquiry why the Baronet thus chose to convey his prisoner to a spot so solitary, and so far removed from observation: but men bent upon any fearful act, will, perhaps unconsciously, select a fit place to do it in. And Sir William might have had some vague idea of the kind, as he strode towards this remote field, holding a stern silence, during which he probably nerved himself for the coming event, and pulling, at every step, the end of his victim's manacle. About the middle of the waste ground, he suddenly halted, whirled short upon Talbot, raised his person high, as he struck the end of his pike-staff into the sod, and then leaning on the weapon, and glaring a cool though fierce glance from beneath his meeting brows, at last broke the long silence.

"Tabot, where is my wife?" His tones were not loud, yet they sounded strangely distinct.

"*Your wife?*" repeated Talbot meaningly, as he returned his rival's stare. His voice wanted little of the rigid composure of that in which he had been addressed, while it seemed an echo as well of the Baronet's cadence as of his words.

The querist started; perhaps at the recognition of a resolved mood, cool as his own, when something more to his purpose was naturally to have been expected in Talbot's situation.

"Heaven and earth!—do you only repeat my question? have you heard it distinctly?

"Yes, distinctly."

"And will not answer it?"

"No."

"No?—I have saved your life!"

"That is yet to be shown."

"How?—how, better than I have already shown it?"

"Set me at liberty."

"You would do so in my situation?"

Talbot was silent. Sir William repeated his question.

"I will make no reply."

"You need not. I know well in what manner you would use over me the power I now have over you."

"If so, pass the subject."

"Talbot, still you can bribe me to set you free. Speak but a few words, and I cut this rope, and give you safeguard beyond the last insurgent outpost."

"Propose the words."

"First—I again demand—where is my wife?"

"You mean, Sir Thomas Hartley's daughter?"

"Be it so. How have you disposed of her?"

"Still I must decline to answer you."

"Well, this at least, this—" Sir William began to tremble, while his captive remained self-possessed, and he hissed a question into Talbot's ear.

"No!" was the quick answer: "No! she is yet, what she has ever been, innocent as the angel inhabitant of Heaven!"

"Swear it!—swear by the Eternal Ruler of the Universe, who, in the silence of this night, listens to record your oath! to record it, Talbot, for you, or against you."

"By that Great Judge, before whom in a few seconds I may appear, I swear it!"

"Well, I believe you. For, Talbot, could you, without peril to your eternal lot, answer me otherwise—otherwise I had been answered."

Sir William's voice sank low, expresing the relief his feelings experienced. For a moment his head drooped towards his breast: but soon he raised it to its former fierce elevation.

"Villain!—and you have well and truly judged my character—you dare not suppose I could drag you here, bound in a felon rope, at my mercy, and not kill you. Kill you—ay! and your last answer has sealed your doom! Murderer, miscreant, fool!—yes, fool!—your death now becomes necessary—now—here—this

instant, inevitable, to hinder you from accomplishing over me the triumph you have not yet attained. You know me, and I know you. With all the stains upon your accursed name, I can credit your oath, and you die, that you may not disentitle yourself to repeat it!"

"And do not suppose," retorted Talbot, still seemingly echoing the tones in which he was addressed—"do not *you* suppose that, after understanding your character and your nature, I had expected mercy at your hands when I gave that answer!—Call me not fool. Fool, at feast, you do not believe I am. You know that, from your first interference on the top of the hill, I read your purpose. That I did not dream of averting it by my reply to a question worthy of your base nature. That all along I expected you would coolly shed my blood!—Now, point your pike at once, and rid me of your abhorred company!"

"Ay?"—laughed out Sir William Judkin, at last openly excited—"ay! by the spacious heavens above us!—And I feared—I trembled at the thought that any other man than myself might have a share in killing you. You saw me whisper and motion from us, ere we entered this field, the man who, on account of the murder of his beloved brother, through your agency, pretends to dispute the right with me. I bribed him to leave us together for a moment. Had he refused, I would have earned the opportunity of dealing with you alone, by first stretching him at my feet. No hand but this—this—shall dare to let forth one drop of your blood—For it is all mine—mine, every little atom!"

"The Lord have mercy on my soul! said Talbot solemnly, and now not without emotion.—"Oh, well I know it—the least animal knows its natural murderer; and I—could I mistake you?—The Lord have mercy on my soul!" he repeated, in a broken voice, and yet in such fervour of appeal as a courageous man assumes when, though taking a farewell of this life, he can cast forward a hopeful look into eternity—"The Lord have mercy on my soul!" he said, for the third time.

"And," resumed Sir William Judkin, in his former strain of loud exultation—"I could satisfy a sceptic, if he dared to raise a doubt, of my fair, my indisputable claim to every bubble that courses round your heart!"

"I ask but one minute's liberty to kneel," interrupted Talbot, evidently not attending to the last words—"hold the rope more at length, and only let me kneel."

"First hear me," answered his rival, twining yet another coil

round his left-hand, while he grasped the pike in his right. "Even to yourself I will recite the grounds of my exclusive proprietorship in your life. Gainsay them if you can"—his high voice sank ominously low.—"You dared to cross my love—you dared to raise your eyes to the very lady I had wooed and won! You leagued and plotted with a common ruffian to murder me!—You sent him to waylay me!—upon the felon gallows, hanging like a dog, you watched the last agonies of my father-in-law!—By perjury you contrived his fate, and by perjury you would have doomed me to the same death of ignominy——Next, with the hands that all but strangled her father, you tore away my wife, and you now refuse to render her back to me, or to discover the place of her imprisonment. But,—" his voice sank lower still—"but, Talbot, the deadliest item is to be told—you dared, too—"

Sir William stopped, for the footsteps of Murphy sounded near, as he said,—"Tundher-an' fire, Curnel! will you keep him talkin' all the night long?—Let me have my share o' the work, till I be goin'."

"Here, Murphy," cried Sir William, speaking rapidly—"what value do you set on your revenge against this man?"

"What value duv I—what?" asked the gaping fellow, as he endeavoured to comprehend the question.

"Sir, take these two guineas," rejoined Sir William eagerly; "take them, and leave him to me—I would have no partner in putting him to death."

"Och, by the hokey!" replied Murphy, and he could say no more, for still he was not able to understand why he should get so considerable a bribe.

"Or, if you persist,"—Sir William burst into rage—"I will first kill you, and then stretch him upon your body!—Begone, I say!"

"An' is it to go away, your honour is givin' the good money?"

"Yes—I would purchase from you the sole privilege of taking vengeance upon him."

"That's as much as to say you'll pike him yourself, widout any body to help you?"

"Ay!" cried Sir William exultingly—"pike him while an inch can quiver!"

"Well, I wish you loock, Curnel: the only spite I have to 'im is on the head o' the poor brether o' me; but sence you say you'll do it for the both of us, at onct, an' do it so well, into the bargain, sure, there's no differ betuxt us;—good-night!"

"Leave me! quick, quick!"

"Och, as quick as you plase: to tell the blessed truth, I had only half a heart for it in the night time, this a-way, an' in this ugly, lonesome place, whatever I'd do by the light o' the sun:" and the man plodded towards the hill, wondering much at the fancy of "the Curnel," who, "it was asy enough to see, thought the pike-exercise to be great fun, when he'd give two yellow guineas to have it all to himsef, an' be ready to ate one up in a bit, jest for not takin' 'em at the first offer."

"Now, Talbot," said Sir William Judkin, "we are quite alone. Prepare yourself!—You stand here my bound and manacled victim, and I will slay you."

"Finish the last charge you were about to make against *me*, when your fellow-murderer interrupted us," replied the other calmly.

"No, Talbot—not now—I perceive it would gratify you, and I will not. You know my meaning,—that is sufficient."

"Then, even of you, I can crave a last boon—one already preferred—Let me kneel down."

"Ay, there—" he held the rope at its full length, so that Talbot could, without struggling, gain the position he wished. "It tallies with my humour" he said,—"I am unwilling to spare you one pang! Kneel—look your last at the bright stars. Think your last thought of her whom you leave behind to *my* love, and to *my* triumph over you! Fully feel what it is to die by the hand of an exulting rival, in youth, in hope,—a few hours ago—almost his conqueror!—I can kill you only once; but the torments these thoughts must give you, will prolong, in anticipation, to my heart, the positive enjoyment of the final act. Nor dare to build a lying comfort upon the hope of my not discovering the place to which you have forced her. Fool! I call you so again, fool! I will find my wife—ay, *my wife*, Talbot, if she yet lives upon the surface of the earth!"

Captain Talbot had quickly availed himself of the permission to fall opon his knees. For a moment he seemed occupied in mental prayer, his eyes turned upward. Then he suddenly broke forth aloud.

"I have fearful things to answer for at thy Judgment Seat—in thy mercy, accept my present repentance, on the verge of an early and fearful death. And O Almighty Father of my being! if the prayer of a wretched sinner can ascend into thy presence, give ear to my last earthly petition. Permit not the approach of my base murderer to the mistress of my heart! Stretch forth thy interposing arm between them: shield her, save her!—Thou wilt, O

God, thou wilt! I feel the comfort of thy promise in my soul! Unworthy as I am, my prayer has been heard!" He started to his feet, as quickly as his pinioned arms would permit him, and addressed Sir William Judkin—"Yes! I have had a view into futurity. The spirit of prophecy is upon me. You can slaughter me. But listen—never, never, will you enjoy her smiles from whom you thus separate me! Never will her white arms clasp my murderer's neck! And I leave her but a little time before you—*you*, too, must sink into an early and ignominious grave. And during your short sojourn upon earth, my watchful spirit, hovering over your most secret steps, will still protect my beloved from your touch!"

"This, then, to free you for your mission!" scoffingly cried Sir William Judkin. While Talbot spoke, he had gradually shortened the pike-handle in his grasp, and pointed its head to his victim's breast. With cool and deadly certainty he was making the push forward, when he felt the weapon seized behind him, and forcibly tugged backward. At the same instant, both his arms were secured, and the pistol, which he had thrust into his bosom, was snatched from him by a woman's hand, that woman the same through whose agency he had escaped from the castle of Enniscorthy.

While he struggled desperately to force himself out of the grasp of two strong men, each of whom held separately one of his arms, the woman cut asunder Talbot's bonds. "Now!" she cried, in the same impressive voice which on a former occasion had startled Sir William Judkin; "now, Talbot, fly: for you are free to fly! Pause not an instant: your eye tells the vengeance you would in turn take upon him—but dare not to injure a hair of his head! If I have saved him from the guilt of shedding your blood, I can and will farther save him from death or injury at your hands. Fly, and do not parley: fly while you are not prevented!"

"We meet again!" cried Captain Talbot, walking close up to his rival. Then he made use of his unforeseen freedom, and quickly left the spot.

"*We have* met again!" said the woman, also confronting Sir William, the moment Talbot had departed.

"Fiend from hell!" exclaimed the Baronet, madly renewing his struggles, and now more successful than at first. One arm was disengaged; with its clenched hand he struck his second captor to the ground, and bounded backward at full liberty, catching up the pike that had been forced from him, and then flung upon the grass.

"Perish, wretch! whoever you are!" he continued, darting his weapon at the man he had just felled. The faint exclamation of his victim was cut short by the flutter of his last breath.

"And now," glaring around for another prey, but the second man had disappeared; and the woman stood on the fence of the field, crying out after him—"Stand, coward!—come back, or he escapes me!—I will not fire upon him, and alone I cannot secure him!" Ere she had done speaking, Sir William had closely approached her, with the stealthy stride of the Indian creeping upon his foe. The rustle of the grass under his feet caused her to turn: when she saw him so near, a suppressed scream escaped her, and she jumped down, and was hid from his view by the fence.

Eagerly he sprang after her. In his haste, and perhaps on account of the exhausted state of his frame, his foot slipped, and he fell backward. Regaining his feet, with curses and imprecations, he stood, at a second effort, outside the field. A figure rapidly made way towards the town, along a narrow pathway leading from the base of Vinegar-hill, and he believed it was a woman's garment which fluttered on the light breeze. Sir William pursued with his utmost speed, still keeping the fugitive in view; but at a particular point, the pathway ran between rising grounds, which deeply shadowed it, and there the moving object escaped his eye. Footsteps, however, still sounded before him, and he did not relax his speed: they grew fainter, and he summoned all his strength even to increase it; they suddenly ceased, and he stopped, panting and staggering, to look around. He had passed the narrow track leading from Enniscorthy to the hill; he was in the ruined suburb which had been consumed upon the day of the late attack. Silence reigned through all the black desolation that surrounded him, and no living creature appeared in view.

"I am lost," he muttered, keenly aroused to a sense of the disappointments of the last half-hour—"on every side lost: hell and earth league against me!" Furiously shouting, as if in defiance of the faintness he felt approaching, Sir William sank upon the ground: overstrained nature could no longer bear up against the fatigue and the agitation he had for nearly three days and nights endured.

CHAPTER XXXV.

It is not with us always a matter of choice that we present before the reader pictures of human passion and excess, which, we are aware, may inspire some tyro-critic, whom they instruct in the secrets of his fellow creatures, with a hint, whispered over the shoulders of such of our patrons as, like the indolent Gray, read new novels on sofas. But we paint from the people of a land, amongst whom, for the last six hundred years, national provocations have never ceased to keep alive the strongest, and often the worst passions of our nature. Whose pauses,—during that long lapse of a country's existence,—from actual conflict in the field, have been but so many changes into mental strife. Who, to this day, are held prepared, should the war-cry be given, to rush at each other's throats, and enact scenes that, in the columns of a newspaper,

> ("That folio of four pages, happy work!
> Which not even critics criticise,")

would show more terribly vivid than in those chapters any selected by us, from former facts, for the purposes of candid though rapid illustration.

Necessity, then, rather than choice, sometimes compels us to exhibit individuals and occurrences proper to the community that supplies originals for our study. We do not pourtray the minds, the hearts, the habits, the manners, or the acts of a tranquillized and a happy people. Least of all do we pourtray the quiet and passionless decorum which can only result from a well-knit, long-confirmed, prosperous, and perhaps selfish state of society.

If, therefore, some such critic as has before been mentioned, occasionally object to us the breadth of our sketch, or the harshness of our colouring, his quarrel is with human nature, and, it may be, with human policy. Not with us.

Yet it is, to ourselves, rather a painful labour than a pleasant relaxation, when we are obliged to go through some scenes we would gladly leave unnoticed. On the contrary, it is a relief when, as is now about to be the case, we can consistently drop into company with certain of our characters, from whom we need apprehend no furious ebullitions of passion, no wild aggression against the species to which we all belong.

We have to recur to Hartley Court, and describe some events which occurred in that desolate mansion immediately after Sir William Judkin left it, upon the night of his escape from the castle of Enniscorthy. The old, spirit-broken butler listened to the gallopin clatter of Sir William's horse, until the sounds died away in the distance, and then slowly quitted the stable-yard and re-entered the house.

His aged wife, the housekeeper, and Nanny the Knitter, were seated in the kitchen. The one holding her checked apron to her eyes, as she rocked backward and forward; the other occupying, even under existing circumstances, a certain "cricket stool," which, during her many visits, she had always considered her proper throne. Invariably, indeed, upon her arrival to share the warmth of the kitchen-fire in Hartley Court, Nanny would look about for this article of furniture, and when asked to be seated, reply, "Yes, wid a heart-and-a-half, my honey-pet, an' bless the providhers for the *cooramuch* * fire, but I don't see my stool any where" (although she could point out its possessor.) This declaration of partiality for "her stool" never passed unheeded; and she would carry it to the corner close to "the hob," and when established upon it become president of the gossip for the evening. On the present occasion, however, although occupying her usual post, little appearance of former comfort was to be seen even in Nanny's corner. When oppressed by extreme misery, people grow indifferent to those little external arrangements which confer upon their dwellings and persons a character of cheeriness. Something within the mind murmurs, "I do not care to attend to such matters now,—let them remain as they are." The fire had burnt down in the large kitchen-grate; many of the culinary utensils were in disorder; a chair, or a form, remained upset, no one caring to put it upright. A solitary candle, only half illuminating the spacious and arched apartment, was allowed to flare on without trimming, until the drooping wick ate into its side. A very old black cat, who, from the hour of her birth, had never before needed to approach, for her perfect enjoyment, nearer than within some feet of the fire, now sat but half asleep in its ashes.

Yet, comfortless as was the appearance of the kitchen, the old butler and his wife preferred to occupy it upon this evening, rather than sit in their own room, where they said, "they had no right to sit any longer, ow nthat their master was gone." No other per-

* Snug.

sons were inmates of the desolate house. It had been deemed necessary, that none who could not strictly be depended upon should learn the place of concealment into which the plate was to be removed; a consultation had ensued between the projectors of the important scheme, and, at Nanny's suggestion, many of the inferior domestics were sent away from Hartley Court. Two females, who could not without strong cause be summarily disposed of, had luckily supplied good reason to the housekeeper for their immediate dismissal, by attempting, amid the general confusion and dismay, to pilfer some valuable articles. Timothy Reily, as is known, had been apprehended along with his master. Three of his male fellow-servants, who were refused admission, as evidences for Sir Thomas, at the gate of the castle of Enniscorthy, only returned to the house to communicate the intelligence, together with that of the Baronet's conviction, and then set off, infuriated, to join the insurgents, and revenge his death upon the party they considered as his murderers.

Long after the butler's return to the kitchen, silence continued between the sad trio. Nanny at last spoke.

"Misthress Flannigan, my honey, the darlin' of a Sir William is heart-scalded—the Lord look down upon him, poor crature, this blessed an' holy night!"

Nanny had never been dstinguished for any great ardency of feeling. Since her husband's death, little had occurred to arouse the passion of grief within her equable breast. All had gone well with her; free from trouble, and certain that the morrow would find her as welcome a visitant amongst her neighbours as ever, she had seen her weasel-skin purse gradually distending to portion off her only daughter. And when that daughter was addressed by a "daler," from the town of Ross—a middle-aged man, who had come into Nanny's district to make purchases in the way of his traffic—and when having visited his remote establishment she had found it "snug," and consequently agreed that her Nancy should become its mistress, the old woman remained without care of any kind. For twenty years she had shed no tear on her own account: it could, therefore, scarce be expected that she should weep much over the sorrows of others. And, in truth, though generally present amid the domestic griefs of all in her neighbourhood, none ever reckoned on seeing her join the mourning wail. It was only calculated that her constant habits of bending her mind to determine what was best to be done under every change of circumstances, would give them the advantage of her care and guidance of affairs, which they were too much afflicted to look after. For Nanny's

own part, her predominant spirit of curiosity, and her trade of intermeddling in other people's concerns, supplied abundant excitement—(even denying her all claims to benevolence, which we by no means do)—for exertions invariably presumed on, and seldom unprofitably undertaken. Upon the present unparalleled occasion, however, she felt the necessity of making a show of sympathy with the weeping domestics. It was something like a mumbling, ill-finished attempt at a moaning sound, which she sent forth, moving her head from right to left as its accompaniment. Thus she had prefaced the observation we have just recorded; and when the tears and real sobs of her auditors came afresh at the associations of complicated misery her words suggested, still Nanny could contribute no more than her gurgling noise, and the mechanical motion of her strangely attired head.

"An' the poor disthracted barrowknight is gone back wid himself to Enniscorthy, Misthress Flannigan, my honey," she continued.

"I fear so," said the butler—"Where they will soon hang him, as well as my poor masther. Och! och! see what a world it is, an' what people is in it! Where's the one 'ud think, this day twelvemonth, that Square Capt'n Talbot, that used to get his bit an' his sup amost every day undher this poor roof, an' be walkin' out, in the mornin' an' in the evenin', with the purty Miss Eliza—Lady Eleezabeth Judkin, barrowknight, that is now,—that he'd be the man to bring all this throuble on his good friends!"

"I never was desaved by him," quoth the housekeeper. "*He* was a black, forbiddin'-lookin' young man, except when he put on the smiles for my darlin' young lady. May ill fortune, as black as his looks an' his heart, sthrew his road every day he sees the light! An' Sir William Judkin, who'd think he could be sich a wicked gintleman—him that once an' always had the good-humour on his hansome face? Sure, it was all as one as a thing done, out-an'-out, when he swore he'd pitch Nanny from the window, blessed be the Heavens!"

"He can't be blamed,—sure, what happened was enough to turn any Christian saint into a madman. But, ah! the Lord purtect us! what a thraitor-way the other went to work!" added Mrs. Flannigan, after a pause.

"A man that's crassed," said Nanny, "listens to ould Nick's whispers, an' sure, he whispered the worst o' bad thoughts into the ould sweetheart's head. Bud stop," cried the acute-eared old woman—"isn't there some one thryin' to get in? Did you boult the passage-dour, comin' back from the stables, Misther Flannigan, my
[illegible]y?"

"No," replied the butler, alarmed at the recollection; "I forgot it in my throuble."

"Well, wait here," said the intrepid Knitter. "Put the candle undher the biler, an' I'll stale asy, an' thry to boult it for you."

A passage led to a door opening into the back-yard, and along its sides were other doors communicating with other apartments—the housekeeper's room, the larder, the pantry, the servants' hall, and servants' bed-chambers. Through this passage Nanny, "widout makin' mooch noise wid her feet," alertly glided. Recollecting the apartment into which Sir William Judkin had burst his way, she stopped a moment to turn the key in the back-door that opened into it. Then, as well acquainted as the old black cat in the kitchen, with every step she should take, she continued her progress in the dark.

The noise which had at first alarmed her was but indistinctly heard, having occurred at the front of the house. To her consternation, as she approached the back-door, the heavy latch was raised, and persons quickly entered. She crouched by the wall, near enough to hear some of their conversation, and the well-remembered tones of one of the speakers made her shiver with terror. They were the same that once, under a certain lime-tree, when Nanny was detected in eavesdropping, had threatened her with annihilation if she should ever again be similarly encountered.

"All right, Sam!" said this voice. "We're in, as sure as the Divil is in Rathdowny—an' I b'lieve that's a thing there's little doubt about. Are the other boys comin'?—We must put a face on it, an' lay it all at the dour o' Whaley's yeomen."

"They're thryin' at the shetthers abroad," answered he of the wooden-leg; "I'll have 'em in to you, wid a hop-step-and-jump."

Nanny heard Sam pass out into the yard: to hide herself was now her only thought. It was a case of life and death to her:—self only could be considered. She did not, therefore, dream of stealing back with any intelligence to the kitchen, but glided into the housekeeper's room, nearer at hand, so noiselessly, that even the acute and listening ear of Bill Nale heard not a stir.

In this room was a very large chest, such as may yet be found in the possession of Irish housewives of the middling class, who keep under one lock their wardrobe, their linen, their important papers, and sundry articles of value: beneath its massive lid Mrs. Flannigan, sharing her husband's cares and duties, had been wont to deposit the plate belonging to Hartley Court, bedding it upon a quantity of house-linen. The reader is aware that, previous to Sir William

Judkin's visit to the house upon this evening, the old butler, his wife, and Nanny the Knitter, had been employed in conveying the treasure to a place of concealment. His loud knocking interrupted their task, and sent them to seek hiding-holes for themselves, but not before the greater number of the valuable articles had been safely disposed of. A few spoons, a pair of candlesticks, and some such matters, they did abandon, however, to the supposed intruders; and, in their haste and panic, also forgot to close the chest. The latter fact Nanny particularly recollected as she crept across the room. By some extraordinary contrivance she got into the place of refuge she had contemplated, pulled down the lid "azy, azy." It was fastened by a spring-lock, which instantly shot home; and Nanny as instantly recollected that she was now a prisoner, perhaps for a longer time than she had reckoned on.

Indeed, after vainly trying to raise the lid again, this thought startled the old dame almost out of her sense of the danger she had incarcerated herself to avoid. But some noise through the house soon recalled her superior terrors of her persecutor. Then came the assurance of perfect obscuration from his dreaded eye; and she crouched down upon her couch of linen, quite resigned even to protracted imprisonment, since by it she could escape the dark fate Bill Nale had, under certain conditions, promised her.

With one ear at the keyhole, and her mouth wide open, as if through it also she hoped to admit sound, and her old withered heart smiting her ribs so forcibly that she could hear every blow, Nanny listened for a considerable time. At first, the noise through the house sank into silence; then it arose again, faint and remote, however, to her gaping ear; then a second time died away. Delusive Hope, who deceives, it may safely be asserted, as often as she points to reality, whispered through the only breathing-hole of her prison, that Nanny had indeed escaped the fangs of the person whom, above all others in the world, she had reason to fear.

Her heart moderated its assaults against her ribs. She stretched herself at full length on her couch, with something like a return of her usual sensations of comfort. Alas! the clamour of voices, and the stamping of feet, now arose nearer than before; they echoed through the vaulted passage leading to the room in which she had taken shelter; closer and closer they came. Until at last, with sensations almost of dissolution, with failing breath and shivering frame, she heard the door flung open, and persons rudely enter.

"Where have you put the pikes to hide, you old Crop?—The house was full of 'em—we must find 'em afore we quit," said a

voice, which, even under the disguise of an assumed tone, the wretched Knitter knew to be that of her enemy. She at once guessed, recollecting the words she had before overheard in the passage, that he and his associates had assumed the garb of yeomen, in order to commit plunder with impunity. Such indeed was the case. The disguise could easily be obtained, nothing more being necessary than to strip the dead bodies of the loyal soldiers slain during the last few days. By these means Nale and his gang came fully caparisoned as the King's adherents.

"I have never looked on a pike since I was born, gentlemen—never, I declare solemnly. There is not such a thing in the house, to my knowledge."

"Ay, a purty story that the old Croppy wouldn't have the darthers ready for his men. What's in this big chest, you Papish thief?"

"Only some linen."

Nanny fervently wished the assertion were true.

"We'll soon know that. Open it, this moment. Ay, it's the very chest we were tould to look for 'em in."

A pause ensued. Nanny heard Nale say something in a growling accent, but his words escaped her. Then the old butler, speaking in a high voice, declared he had not the key, but would go to seek it.

It is in vain we have put down our pen in the hope of selecting terms sufficiently forcible to describe Nanny's feelings, when she learned that the lid of her prison was to be raised, and her person revealed to view. It appeared evident that Bill Nale expected to find a treasure in the chest—Oh! what would be his rage, when he should discover only a miserable, trembling old woman, upon whom, without this additional cause for revenge, but merely as punishment for again meeting her in the character and situation of a listener to his private discourse, he had sworn to inflict a horrid death—in fact, for well did Nanny remember his words—"the death of an ould cat!" If ever an "ould cat," felt beside herself with the terror of coming fate, when detected in the larder by the cook, devouring the rare morsel destined to grace his master's table—if ever such poor offender gave herself up for lost, as the white-capped man of dishes, shutting the door behind him, entered just in time to scare her from the last mouthful of her meal, and then, glaring alternately at the tell-tale fragment of the delicacy, and at the detected glutton, advanced, knife in hand, upon her—if, not daring to lick her lips in his presence, the cringing puss may be said to have experienced dreadful qualms of horror—; more

violent, even than her sensations, were at this moment those of the unfortunate Nanny.

She had raised herself, resting on her hand, to listen to the intruders. Now, with a verry low but utterly despairing groan, she twisted her person around, sank on her knees and elbows, rested her teeming forehead on her death-cold hands. As she afterwards described it, when we questioned her on her state of mind during this severe trial—"her ould heart riz up to the root of her tongue, an' she could count every ugh, ugh, ugh, it gave there, as plain as that"—rapping her knuckles against a table. "An' it went as fast too, my honey,"—and she repeated the knocks, about three to a second. "It was the very most I could do to keep swallyin' it down, or into the poor mouth o' me it 'ud jump, purtect the hearers!"

"Listen, Sam," said Rattling Bill, speaking, while the butler remained away, in his own undisguised voice, as he gave the chest a shake which caused the few articles of plate inside to jingle, and sadly discomposed the position of the poor prisoner.

"By the deed, an' sure the lob is in it," answered Sam.

"What keeps ould Flannigan?" asked another voice, hadn't we bether break it open? The daylight 'ill soon be comin'."

"Did you tackle the horse and cart, as I bid you, Sam?" questioned Nale.

"It's ready, upon my word."

"Well—the dawn is breakin', sure enough—an' it wouldn't *do* to be caught by the piketmen wid the king's coats on us," resumed Bill. "Curse o' Cromwell on the day! where is it comin' so soon?" Bear a hand here, my hearties, an' we'll whip chest an' all away, hoize it on the cart in the yard, smash it to bits in some soft place, an' then ye may burn the *skeighs** an' spill out the *murphies*† on silver dishes all the rest o' your lives."

"That's the plan o' plans, by the deed!" concurred Sam. "So, come."

The men surrounded the chest. There was a general "here!" given in that long cadence which is the signal for simultaneous exertion. One end of it was raised; Nanny slipped down to the other. "Here again!" the men piped, and she felt herself lifted up.

"It's mortial heavy," observed one.

"Ha!" laughed Nale, "that's the sign an' token that there's choicer stuff than feathers inside of it. Listen again," as the plate continued to jingle; "there's nate music, I b'lieve—nater nor the

* Osier strainers. † Potatoes.

best o' pipes ever played. 'Silver an' goold to thee I give,' says the priest."—

The laugh that followed this jocularity sounded on Nanny's ear as does the chuckle of his torturer to the benumbed yet terrified senses of the wretch who, in that state of suffering called night-mare, finds himself gasping under the fancied inflictions of a score of fiends.

As Sam had engaged, a cart and horse stood in the yard ready to receive the much-prised load. The groaning carriers laid their fardel on the cart; Nanny judged, if judgment she could pretend to form, that a conversation ensued in very low tones between four persons. Then the cart went for some time rapidly along, over a rough road. Many a jolt did she get, and often did her poor head come in rude contact with the sides and ends of her moving dungeon. Then she concluded that the way became still more difficult; for she could feel that she travelled very slowly.

And during this slackened progress she caught—very unwillingly, for the first time in her life—the continuation of a dialogue held between Nale and Sam, who sat at different sides of the chest, and spoke in loud accents over it. From the free and confidential manner in which they interchanged opinions and allusions, Nanny concluded that they were now alone with their prize, and alas! unsuspicious of the near espoinage of that individual whom, above all that breathed, Nale had formerly seemed unwilling to admit into his secrets. Fresh agony came with the thought, that this involuntary offence would surely add ruthless determination to Bill's revenge upon her person.

"By my deed an' conscience!" said Sam, "it was the hoith o' good luck that put him in your road."

"Ha!—an' never mind me for not missin' the windfall. Never fear Bill Nale for makin' his milch-cow o' the rock o' sense, as people thinks Square Talbot to be. You know well, Sammy, we never want a shiner while his purse has a cross in it."

"Threw enough, Bill. But who'd think that he'd turn out sich a scape-grace, as well as sich a fool. He that all the world, too, took for a civil, honest fellow intirely."

"By the livin' farmer! I couldn't think it of him mysef, the first time I come across him. Faith! it isn't all out plain to me that I didn't bite him, widout knowin' it, some day or other, since we happened to be such friends together."

"But, betuxt yousef an' mysef, Billy, honey, isn't it a raal wondher, an' a thing without sense in it, how he could go to turn hangman upon Square Hartley?"

"No wondher at all, though I won't deny you what you say about the sense o' the matter. It's my notion he'd go, neck-an'-heels, into the roastin' pit—you know where I mane, or, at laste you'll know it one o' these days—I b'lieve he'd stand a week's fryin' in that place, jest to have a smile from Square Hartley's daughther the week afther; an' he couldn't get near her by hook or by crook, while the father lived. Why, Sam, if you seen how he bounced up when I showed him my crans for noosin' the old barrowknight;—though, by the piper! Sam, I never done a thing that went so hard against my grain as that! he was a raal gintleman, so he was. But, when the marriage come about, I couldn't do what I had to do any other way; an' they have to blame themselves. I tould them to dhrop the business, an' they wouldn't."

"Who did you warn on the head of it?"

"I sent a message to the daughter hersef, by that ould Tory, Nanny the Knitter. But indeed, it isn't clear to me that she said my words right fornent Miss Hartley. No matther. Wait till we do what's in hand, an' then, maybe, I'd clap my paw on the ould thramper."

Nanny felt no increase of comfort in her chest.

"An' you helped Square Talbot so bravely, Bill, to lock up the sweetheart at last."

The listener experienced, for an instant, some little interest apart from her own absorbing situation.

"Yes, we done that for 'im, an' we done it hansome. She went wid hearty good-will, thinkin', by the hokey frost! that she was goin' to meet the poor father. But she must thravel a longer road afore she sees him again."

"An' what road did she thravel that prasent time?"

"Jest to Square Talbot's new house, that's near Dunbrody. You know it, Sam. It's on the hoight afore you cross the hill, goin' to the ould abbey. He's only waitin' till we have the mackerony of a husband she got the other day berred snug in the little church; then he'll make her marry him, in spite of all the world. Them women are the divils, out-an'-out, Sammy. Well I know it. There isn't a livin' *man* on Ireland's ground able for Bill Nale. But ever since the day he was born, one woman or another crowed over him. First, there was the ould, cross-grained mother o' me from the black North. She went her road, an' I thought I was a free man. But then the Duoul puts it into the proud heart o' that great lady of a wife I had to take a notion o' me, an' quit her father's grand house on a pillion at my back, when you and I, Sam,

forged the *rhaumaush* of a story about gettin' her from the fairies, that all the sensible neighbours gave ear to."—

"Yes, by my deed! an' a nate, pleasant story it was. But the fine ladyship didn't stick to you long, Billy, my boy."

"By the hokey frost! Sam, she's dhrivin' me still,—or else another woman for her. An' that's all the same thing."

"And nothin' in the world 'ill do, Bill, bud to sthretch him in Dunbrody?"

"Nothin'. 'Twas the first ordhers I got, as you ought to remember, Sam, by what you saw an' hard the night big Father Rooche tuck him out of our hands. An', by the farmer! betther he doesn't desarve, if it was only on account of his gettin' clear o' me so often. Why, only last night agin, Sam, we were cocksure of him, when the girl let him out of Enniscorthy Castle wid her own hands. But, *naubocklish*, I'll pin him, an' that soon, or I'm not Bill Nale! So enough said."

"But tell us, Bill, how is Hartley's daughter to be brought to marry the man that sthrung up her father, an' that's to have a hand in murdherin' her husband!"

"How the *Duoul* does Bill Nale know? Or what the *Duoul* does Bill Nale care? It's my own business I'm doin', Sam Stickleg, an' not Square Talbot's; though *he'd* swear to any one 'ud ax him that I was workin' neck-or-nothin' for him, an' for nobody else. Well, see what fools there's in the world! An', in all my doin's, the biggest fools I ever met were ever an' always chaps like him, that thought they had a power o' sense in their heads. Only for one thing I'd turn round on him, at the jingle of a purse, and let poor Hartley's daughter have the sweetheart she'd rather have. But she must be widout him to plaise one that, I tell you once agin, rules Bill Nale as hard as his ould cantankerous cripple of a mother, or his mighty grand lady of a wife ever did."

Nanny heard much more of the conversation of these worthies; and we had from her lips—for we found it impostible to stem her garrulity—materials sufficient to fill many additional pages. But we feel no wish to report the words of such a character as Rattling Bill Nale farther than is absolutely unavoidable.

For about an hour and a half Nanny continued to jolt along in her very uncomfortable vehicle. And although a great portion of the dialogue she overheard could not fail to impress itself upon her mind, still she never ceased to regard the unhappy circumstance of her being a listener to it as, using her own words, an additional

"nail in her coffin." Her whole journey was, therefore, spent in despairing anticipations of the fate which awaited her.

Three different ways she employed herself as the cart jogged and rattled over the broken road. With her ears she took in the terrific information it was none of her wish to acquire. Through her whole frame she shuddered at the inevitable death in store for her at the hands of a man who had proclaimed himself Sir William Judkin's murderer, and almost in the same breath, marking her out as another sheep for the slaughter. And during this mixture of listening, despairing, and chattering, her lips moved with all the rapid flippancy of long practice, and of her habitual gossiping, softly articulating, once and again, the round of prayers to which for a whole life they had been accustomed, and which they could pronounce, letter by letter, without much inconvenience to the agency of the mind, and indeed, with only a vague idea of devotion accompanying the process. Many fervent, because more extemporaneous ejaculations for mercy occasionally broke up her parrot-like orisons, as some tremendous view of her doom caused her to give an extraordinary cringe, and more freely drove out the cold moisture through the pores of her flesh forehead.

At length the cart halted. She would have preferred that it should jolt and shake her until doomsday. She and her encasement were gently shoved off the vehicle, and came with a shock to the ground: scarce conscious, she expected the moment of her fate. Partly by an unwilled warping of her features, partly from an instinct that the most abject of all abject prayers for mercy was her sole hope, short of a miracle from above, Nanny lay, prepared for the rising of the lid, utter humility and penitence in her attitude and face, and the words of a heart-rending petition ready to burst from her lips, while the "ugh, ugh," of her heart increased to a galloping vibration.

The lid, however, was not so quickly raised. She became half aware that an unexpected pause occurred between her and her last trial. Then the voices of Nale and Sam were distinguished by her ears, at first conveying no words to the failing sense; but gradually the poor Knitter rallied into sufficient self-possession to hear what follows:—

"They ought to be here wid the hommer by this time, if they come by the short cut."

"Faix, an' so they ought—bad manners to 'em when they do come. I hope they'll meet their reward."

"What's the rason you say that, Sammy?" questioned Nale with a grin of intelligence.

"By the deed, how bad they're in want of silver dishes for their praties! It's a great sin to give sich dacent things into their paws, Bill Nale."

"*Naubocklish*, if we don't have the biggest share, Sam. Supposin' them to the fore, you and I, lad, must get the first haul."

"Yoursef, by coorse, Bill, afore me."

"Yes,—I think the first thing that's to be saized on, 'ill be Bill Nale's, any how."

"Ay, by the deed, to make pipe-stoppers of it, if you like."

All this was keen cutting to the poor "first thing that was to be saized on."

"Faix an' deed, an' we b'lieve this 'll smash the thick skull of it, an' let us never mind the hommer," said Sam, approaching with a large stone between his hands. "There now," laying his burden on the chest, mounting after it, and again raising and poising it over the middle of the lid. Certainly, had he let it drop, not only would the "skull," of the massive coffer have been stove in, but the skull of our old friend along with it.

But Nale, casting his watchful eye to the brow of a neighbouring height, called out—

"Hould your hand, Sam! Pitch it on the ground."

The authoritative tone of his chief, Sam durst not disobey, and the stone was accordingly flung wide of the original mark. Nanny afterwards visited the spot, and found the huge piece of rock bedded deep in the soil; and the poor old woman knelt at its side, and offered up very fervent thanksgivings, that it had not descended as was at first planned. If it had, it must have "made poor ould Nanny, my honey, as flat as a pancake."

"Stop, Sam; I see four or five pikemen crossin' the ridge, on their way to the Croppies' camp, I'm thinkin'—Jump down and hide here wid me. If they meet us in our yeoman clothes, we're gone men."

The two rascals stooped on hands and knees by the side of the chest turned from the height. Nanny piously prayed that the Croppy detachment might quickly descend to the by-road with good pikes in their hands. She was disappointed. Taking off his warlike helmet, and using just one eye round the angle of her dungeon, Nale soon ascertained that the wandering peasants were passing out of view without having noticed the horse and cart, or the important article which lay near to both.

"We must jest wait for the hommer afther all," resumed Nale, when it was prudent to arise from his crouching position. "Folly me down here, for a start, Sam, an' I'll tell you more o' the matther."

Nanny heard them walk away, and the rest of their conversation was lost to her ear. But the reader may proceed after them a few steps to the brink of a sand-pit, and then down its abrupt side, until at the bottom of the excavation he hears Nale resume.

"The mornin' is too bright, Sam, to pull out the ould silver dishes in a place that many more people may soon cum upon. Besides, the young schamp I want to lay hould on is gone to Enniscorthy town, an' I must obey ordhers, and be off to keep an eye on him.—More be token agin, you must dhrive the horse an' cart towards Dunbrody wid this other little thrunk, in no time, as I tould you last night.—Don't dare to look glum at me now, but listen how it 'ill be. You see this hole"—pointing almost to his feet—"where the great lob o' pikes were put to hide, afore the risin'. We'll jest shuv the chest down here, an' cover it wid the sand, an' when the night falls agin, we'll come back an' smash it, betuxt ourselves, nate an' quiet. An' when Morrissy an' Redmond walks this way wid the hommer, expectin' their share, why they can have what the cat left o' the bacon, you know. So help a hand, Sammy, an' none o' your foolish looks, I bid you."

Nanny soon caught their returning steps. Then she became aware that, with much labour and difficulty, they dragged her and her prison some little distance forward. Then, as they allowed their lumber to find its own way to the bottom of the pit, it was well for her that it had been massively constructed, and bound with iron plates at the corners, or surely it must have burst open from the violence of its abrupt descent: it was likewise fortunate for Nanny that she had little room to jolt from one end to the other. For, although occupying nearly the whole extent of her dark dungeon, her head and her foxy hat struck so smartly against the end which first rushed downward, that consciousness momentarily departed from her.

She regained her senses at experiencing a second terrible shock through her entire frame, caused by the sudden lowering of the chest into the deep hole to which, until the return of night, Nale had destined it. Not having heard the last communication between the two knaves, she could not remotely calculate the nature of her late hideous evolutions. In vague horror, she remained just sensible of a sudden plunge from the surface of the earth; whither,

or for what purpose, was impervious, an astounding mystery. For aught she could tell, the earth might have opened and swallowed her, a thousand fathoms deep, or she might have fallen from its verge into the terrors of the other world.

But, after rallying her powers of observation, she soon decided that nothing so very fearful had happened to her. A dripping, grating noise sounded on the lid of—it may now be called,—her coffin, and once more she heard Nale saying, "A little 'ill do, Sam. Jest as mooch as hides the top, an' then these bushes an' briars 'ill keep it berred as snug as my ould ganmammy."

"Berred!" cogitated Nanny.

"There," he continued, and the noise of throwing the sand upon her ceased—"There; that's clane an' purty. Now come, Sam, an' we canmake out a hommer for ourselves."

They left her, already stifling and gasping, to decide which death she would choose, suffocation in her premature grave, or braining with the hammer, if indeed she outlived their return, short as must be the time she concluded they would stay away. And no doubt, poor Nanny's sufferings had soon ended in the manner first mentioned, but for a providential and yet only natural interference.

Redmond and Morissy, the two associates despatched by Nale from Hartley Court, to provide the heavy hammer for breaking open the chest, were not without their doubts of his intentions to deal fairly by them. Bill's well-known, and indeed, undisguised character warranted such suspicions; and the men came to positive conclusions, when he directed them to proceed to a certain spot, by a route different from that he proposed to take himself, with the horse and cart. His pointing it out as a short cut did not allay their fears of his consummate knavery and selfishness. They communicated their ideas to each other, and resolved upon a counter-plot. Leaving him, in seeming willingness, to procure the sledge, they returned quickly in his track, dogged the horse and cart stealthily during its whole journey, concealed themselves when it halted, overheard the treacherous conversation about themselves between Bill and Sam "with the stick-leg," (the only name or appellation we could discover as attaching to that very doubtful individual,) and watched the subsequent proceedings of the worthies. The moment they were fairly out of view after interring Nanny, the men came forward, one of them at least determined to act a brave part.

Having previously arranged in their place of concealment, to go to work promptly, they scrambled in silence down the steep pit, and began to remove, without speaking a word, the bushes and sand

from the lid of the chest. The poor buried alive was recalled, by the noise, to the exercise of nearly the last mental observation she remained capable of making. She lay on her knees and elbows, her month open, her head moving up and down to every painful gasp of the thick air which she laboured to force through her lungs. But although the noise slightly restored her to a sense of existence, it by no means communicated a hope that existence was to be prolonged a single instant after the opening of her coffin. Nanny believed she was still in the hands of her cruel enemy. Heavy blows succeeded to the former scraping and shuffling over her head, each skilfully directed by Dick Redmond, so as to force the lid upwards. They were successful; it half opened. There was a rush of warm vapour from within, and a rush of pure atmosphere from without, of which Nanny took a long, renovating draught. But with her rallied feeling of life came instantaneously her horror of what she *had* at last to encounter. In the useless instinct of avoiding the eye of her executionor, she quickly resumed her squatted position, and drew her head as close to her body as she could,—the head of her cloak slipping, with the long-practised jerk, over her ears. As the tortoise, which in her present attitude she much resembled, *will*, in case of attack, draw the most exposed part of his body under his shell.

"Now for it, Daniel, my daisy," cried Dick Redmond, as in high spirits he flung wide the lid of the chest. Nanny heard him not. He peeped in—he opened his eyes: he stared again; but could not attach any certain idea of form or of nature to the object that met his view. Daniel, who all along had been suffering under the fear of Nale's future wrath on account of the course he dared to pursue in this adventure, and whose misgiving heart finally relinquished every hope of escaping detection by a man he believed well-known to the Devil, if he was not the Devil himself;—Daniel remained rather in the background; his tremours only relieved by a covetous anticipation of the sweet jingling sounds that he concluded were to meet his ear, and the shining and splendid treasures *that* he thought were to dazzle his eye.

"Is there mooch?" he timidly asked, while his companion still stared into the chest.

"Sing toi, oi, iddle-dee, toi, i, ee.
Hah, hah, hah, fol, dhe-too-rol-lee!"

answered his more vivacious comrade, singing the chorus of a merry song, of which each verse presented some droll idea, subsequently enjoyed in the "hah, hah, hah!"

"Don't let the soight of it make you take lave o' your senses, Dick," resumed Daniel, now advancing.

"Well, there's no use in talkin', Bill Nale!" Dick went on; "you *are* the biggest rogue that ever was hanged. If this is not makin' gandhers of us, Divil a gandher in the world, but all grey geese." And Redmond seemed highly to enjoy the jest.

"Arrah, what's come over you?" questioned the serious Daniel Morrissy.

"Musha, Daniel, my poor fellow, however the Duoul he done it, Rattlin' Bill Nale dhrew every bit o' the treasure through the boards o' the chest, either while we turned off a minute or so, purtendin to go for the hommer, or at the very time we thought we were watchin' him along the road—by coorse, the bouchal had the kay unknownst to any body. An' see here—here's what he laves for yoursef and mysef! A bundle of ould rags, not worth a Keenogue. All the time he an' Sam talked of chatin us, they knew we were widin hearin', an' the whole o' that talk was jest to make us think they left the threasure behind 'em. Well, Bill, you're a deary of a bird!"

"But isn't it like an ould bag o' blue cloth?" asked Daniel, at length peering in; "an' maybe the goold an' silver is in the inside of it."

"By gonnies, maybe so! Thry."

Daniel cautiously laid his hand on our still crouching friend. She gave a painful moan, and feebly moved her head.

"Oh-a—oh-a! what the Duoul is that?" cried Daniel, jumping backward.

"What! did the bag bite you?"

"It's alive—it's himself is in it, I believe," whispered the superstitious fellow.

"Who?—Nale?"

"Yes, his ownsef. It's as likely as any."

"Bother, Daniel!" laughed Dick. "But, stop—supposin' it is, I'll see how he'll take a clip o' this hommer, by way o' payment for chatin' us." And he stepped to the chest.

"I'm a poor ould lump of a sinner, my honey pet," petitioned Nanny, with a face of the most wretched entreaty that ever sinner wore, as she was raised from her position of terror and vain concealment by the athletic arms of Dick Redmond—"I'm a poor ould lump of a sinner, my honey pet," she repeated, still imagining she addressed another person,—"an' may the marcies meet your darlin' sowls in glory above, an' give marcy to ould Nanny this day—

may loock an' grace come peltin' an' powerin in your road every day you get up from your bed; may hard fort'n be broke afore you—an' may riches galore* be rainin' on you, till you wont know what to do wid it."

"Why, then, thunder-an'-bloody-wars!" cried Dick Redmond, utterly amazed,—nay, very nearly frightened as he looked into the agonized face he held up to his own view,—"Is this you, ould Nanny the Knitther?"—

"Ah, then it is, God help me!" she answered, in a voice wonderfully changed and assured at the blessed conviction that she was not in the gripe of her persecutor. Nanny had now got on her "hunkers," and, with her hands closely clasped, waved from side to side. "Thanks for ever be to the holy Name, isn't it the honey darlin' Dick Redmond I'm spakin' to?"—

An explanation ensued. Dick relished the joke exceedingly.

"An' by rason you once sthrove to get me a good wife, ould Nanny,—'twas no fault o' your's that she turned out conthrary—you done your best—I'll help you out o' your coff'n, afore Bill Nale comes back. There," placing her on the ground—"Taste this, to rise your heart:"—administering some whiskey out of a small bottle. "An' now, run for your life while your legs 'ill last!"

Nanny acted on the advice as strenuously as she was able. In pity to the old creature, Dick assisted her up to the edge of the sand-pit.

"Good bye, my honey pet, an' the Lord grant you your reward in glory for ever, amin! An' my honey, Dick Redmond, when you come across *him*, there'll be no use in tellin' him what kind of a load he had the throuble o' carryin' so far."

"Never fear, Nanny. Say nothin' about us, an' we'll say nothin' about you. It's the best play to keep sacrets on both sides. An' so, take to your heels while you can."

Though much bruised and battered, as well as exhausted, the rejoicing dame set forward at a pace between a trot and an amble, Dick shouting after her—

"Run, your sowl, run! he's afther you! He'll have you if you don't put the stumps to the best o' their knowledge!"—

But little additional exhortation was required to keep Nanny at her utmost speed in an effort to remove, as far as possible, from the scene of her direful troubles. Mumbling thanksgivings at every step, she panted and perspired along. At the very first opportunity, she turned off the road, and made her way over intricate

* In abundance.

paths, and through the most lonesome places, towards a friend's cabin—the nearest at hand, no matter which—Where was the cabin under whose humble roof Nanny had not a friend?

The house of refuge appeared in view. She slackened her pace, drew breath, and began somewhat distinctly to cogitate. Now that her own life seemed at least respited, thoughts of the information acquired as to the fate of "Lady Eleezabeth Judkin, barrowknight," gleaned from the conversation of Nale and his associate, arose in her mind. And with them a really disinterested anxiety to succour her captive patroness. "The honey Sir William, too!" Must she not exert herself to save him from the terrible fate with which he was threatened?—Doubtless, the danger of "makin' or meddlin'," was great. It seemed little less than wilfully precipitating herself into some dilemma as fearful, and perhaps more fatal, than that from which she had just escaped. But suffering seemed to make Nanny's heart magnanimous. "What good was her ould end of a life," when put in competition with that of her beloved young "bennyfacther," and Sir William Judkin? God would guard her—or, if it was "the holy an' blessed Will" that she must suffer, "why, then"—and tears of sympathy with her kind, and even with her own forgotten nature, purer than for twenty years she had shed, obscured the old woman's eyes,—"Why, then, Nanny's part 'ill be gone through, an' that's all!"

The result of her determination will be found developed in a future chapter.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

While Nanny arranges her plans, we are at liberty to visit our heroine, in the house to which Captain Talbot had caused her to be conveyed. Indeed, it seemes our duty to accompany her thither.—Nay, recollecting the imperfect accounts of her motions supplied to Sir William Judkin, first by "the poor girl wid the good karacthers," and next by Miss Alicia Hartley, a plain detail of all her adventures, from the moment she left her father's roof, immediately after her marriage, is called for at our hands.

Until that day, Eliza Hartley—as, notwithstanding her matronly consequence in the world, we shall, with the familiarity of old ac-

quaintance, continue to call her—had never known real sorrow. Beloved by her father, petted by her aunt, adored by her servants, flattered by all her friends, life had been to her a time of continued sunshine, a season of laughter, during which she never laid her head on her pillow with a thought for the morrow. Unless, indeed, it might have been an anticipation of some little pleasure, of which the enjoyment should be deferred until daylight again smiled on Hartley Court. Had Nature formed her heart of indifferent materials, an existence of such unchastened happiness,—nay, of almost unrestrained self-indulgence, might have proved dangerous to the development of her character: haughtiness, obstinacy, and indolent pride, might have resulted from it: above all, mental strength and energy might have been frittered away amid idle pursuits, and the fuss of pretty whims and impulses. But Eliza's heart was shaped in the mould of great feminine goodness. Considerable vivacity, and a gaiety that at times savored of levity, appeared the only distinct impress made upon her character by circumstances which would have rendered other women unbearing and unamiable. True, her gaiety often provoked severe criticism from unfriendly or envious tongues. Even we, must admit that, hitherto, it had occasionally caused her to act without sufficient thought. Or, obeying the impulse of a moment, to fling aside something she really prized for a chase after something that could but momentarily fill her fancy, and was not calculated, upon reflection, to content her nature. Still we cannot bring ourselves to be very harsh upon our pretty heroine. For if she was gay, because fortune treated her too indulgently, she was so too, because she was innocent—innocent in mind, in feeling, in the unconsciousness of a single thought that could make her otherwise; and,

——"The innocent are gay."

Upon the morning, when Eliza became a bride, and with the change saw herself driven from the sunny paths over which she had previously tripped so merrily, adversity did not find in the spoiled child of fortune a weak girl, who could do nothing but tremble or rail at the vicissitude. On the contrary, there suddenly appeared in her a courage and promptitude fitted for the occasion, of which the principle had hitherto slumbered, only because it had never needed to show itself. In one hour she passed out of the thoughtlessness of girlhood into the steady energy of a woman, who, for the sake of those she loves, and by whom she is beloved,

is prepared to dare much without fear, and to suffer all without repining.

Having dried her vain tears, and put off her bridal garments, the first impression of her now serious mind convinced her that the preliminary step to any effort she might be called on to make, ought to consist in seeking a conference with her father and her husband. With a deep composure, which surprised all around her, she bade adieu to her bridesmaids, ordered her carriage to the door, and preceded by her aunt, who involuntarily acknowledging her right to act, and her power to protect, petitioned not to be left behind. Eliza slowly ascended the step, and desired to be driven to the castle of Enniscorthy.

It did not occur to her that she might be refused admittance. Hitherto, wherever she had gone, Eliza had found officious eagerness smoothing the way before her. The carriage stopped before the entrance gate of the temporary prison; she dismounted, and requesting her aunt to wait for her return, drew her veil over her face, in order to disguise it from the bold stare of a group of yeomen assembled near at hand. Not thinking it necessary to ask permission to pass, she was entering the gate, when the rude and ill-clad sentinel, lowering his rusty musket and bayonet, abruptly demanded, "Who are you, an' where are you dhrivin?"

She stepped back, shocked at the interruption. It was the first rudeness that had ever been offered to her. But the quickly curbed tears which started to her eyes did not spring from mortified vanity. Their source lay higher, in the apprehension, that from those whom she came to serve, and whom she felt she could serve, her presence was interdicted.

Regaining her carriage, and taking a moment to think, Eliza spoke from the window, desiring that some officer who had authority to admit her might be sent out. The sentinel took no notice whatever of her request, or rather command, and the unoccupied band of yeomen only stared more boldly than before, some of them leering and winking on each other. With mock respect in his tone and manner, one of them at length answered that her ladyship's orders should be obeyed. In consequence, however, of his delivery of the message inside, an officer advanced to the carriage, and Eliza shrank back in horror and despair, when in that officer she recognised Talbot. His step was not firm, his lips were white, his eyes quailed even beneath her veiled glance, with, as Eliza believed, the cowardice of conscious guilt.

"I have the honour to await your commands, Madam," he sai

after standing some time unnoticed by her at the door of the carriage.

"I understand, Sir," she forced herself to reply, "that I must demand permission from some one in authority to go in to see my Father and my Husband."

"It is indeed necessary that you should do so, Madam," he answered, in a calmer voice than that in which he had at first spoken. The hauteur of her address seemed to have brought back the unwincing sternness of his nature.

"Then, Sir, please to order yonder saucy fellow to let me pass."

"I regret, Madam, that your wish cannot be complied with."

"What, Sir!"—and she started up from her leaning position in undisguised dismay,—"are Sir Thomas Hartley and Sir William Judkin to be shut up from the visits of the daughter and the wife?"

"Yes, Madam. Such must be the case."

"Impossible, Sir! Send your commanding officer hither."

"Excuse me, Madam. In this instance, there is no one to contravene *my* orders."

"Your orders, Sir! These inhuman orders emanate from you!"

"They are my orders, Madam."

"God help me, then! And God help the poor prisoners left at your mercy!"—She again sank back in an agony of despair, and, covering her face with her hands, deep, long moans escaped her.

Captain Talbot seemed suddenly touched. He trembled;—he approached closer to the window, and, in a faltering voice, too low to be heard by Miss Alicia, said—

"Oh! why have you not come alone?—why, this moment, can we not speak fully together?—Eliza! my Eliza,—"

She interrupted him,—starting as if an adder had hissed at her ear, and flung back her veil, that, with an eye authoritative and stern, and now unmoistened with a single tear, she might regard him.

"Wretch!—wretch, as well as villain, leave my sight!"

He stood irresolutely. She peremptorily waved her hand, repeating—"Begone—begone!" His face, even to the lips, white and cold as marble, the young man turned to obey.

"Stop, Captain Talbot!" cried the weeping Miss Alicia. Eliza again hid her face, but she did not interrupt her aunt. Although, in her present mood, she could not bend her own outraged spirit to sue to Talbot, the object to be prayed for was worth some humiliation.

"Oh! Captain Talbot," petitioned the sobbing old lady, clasping her hands together, "surely you will not be so cruel as to refuse

us this favour? I know, I know you will not—you will have pity on us—us, two ladies, with whom you have often sat at the fire-side. Who are as unused to beg any favour, as they are unable to bear the great misery that now visits them. O! take our thanks, our hearts' thanks, and admit us to comfort the poor prisoners!"

Eliza slowly let her hands fall, and gazed upon her former lover, to note the effect of this appeal in his features. His brow only knit more sternly into purpose; all his former apparent vacillation was gone, and he quietly, but steadily, replied—

"Madam, I can only repeat the regret I feel, that duty obliges me to—"

"Drive to the inn!" cried Eliza, again interrupting him. As the carriage turned away, he bowed quietly, and quickly re-entered the gate.

For a time, Eliza's pride, energy, hope, and resolution, quite failed her, and, on the way to the inn, she indulged, along with her aunt, in a shower of bitter tears. Agony and despair rent her bosom. She had felt, and she continued to feel within her, a resolution to brave any danger in the performance of whatever effort her husband and her father might suggest as necessary to their safety; but that, by this refusal to admit her to their presence, she could not direct her zeal, her devotion, and her firmness, upon any course of which they might approve, or which might be beneficial, was an overwhelming thought. And her feelings gained their height, when she farther reflected on the nature of the charge under which her father and her husband had been imprisoned. On the fate that awaited them, if that charge could be established; or, amid the blind fury of the time, even made to look plausible; on the promptitude with which punishment would follow conviction. Above all, on the ominous success which had so far atttended their enemy's measures, and which, calculating by the power he seemed to wield, and the savage determination he still evinced, appeared but a presage of his complete triumph, and of Eliza's utter misery.

Gaining the inn, while filled with these thoughts, it was only natural that, strong in previous energy and resolution, as we have described her to have been, the poor girl should sink under her womanly fears and pangs for those she loved, and under profound despair on her own account.

Miss Alicia, although in the first instance helplessly overpowered, wanted, luckily, for herself, the fresh ardour of feeling that at such moments tears the youthful bosom; for, with the decay of physical capacity to struggle, Nature deadens the susceptibilities of age.

Keeping up, therefore, only her strain of impotent lamentation, she could now administer some necessary comfort to her almost insensible niece. With this view she rang the bell, when the girl "wid the good karacthers" answered it, as we have already heard.

About twilight, having often and vainly sent in the meantime to gather intelligence of the proceedings at the castle, Eliza was roused from her despondency, by the intelligence that a person wished to speak with her on important business. The only important business concerning which, in her mind, any one could desire an interview, must refer to the situation of her father and her husband: she accordingly desired the visitor to be admitted.

A woman of tall stature, muffled and hooded in the common Irish mantle, but not more carefully or remarkably than it is often worn, entered the chamber, and stopping almost at the threshold, addressed our heroine in a low, controlled voice.

"You are the daughter of Sir Thomas Hartley?"

"I am." Eliza could utter no more, for the solemnity of the stranger, in deportment as well as in accent, although her face did not become discernible, conveyed anticipations of sad tidings to be spoken.

"I would converse with you, Madam," continued the woman, impressively.

"Begin, then,"

"Alone."

"This lady is my aunt," said Eliza.

"It matters not. No third person must share our interview, and the business I come to communicate requires immediate attention, Madam."

"Indeed, my good woman," pleaded Miss Alicia, "if you come to say any thing concerning the dear prisoners at the castle, it will be cruelty to exclude me from the conversation."

"You judge correctly, Madam; my communication relates to them, but only to Miss Hartley can it be made. You may hear it from her, not from me: such are my directions, and I cannot and will not permit them to be infringed."

"Are you aware that I am Sir Thomas Hartley's sister?"

"Yes, Madam, but that is nothing to the purpose. Your niece grows uneasy at our delay;—please to leave us together."

"Do so, dearest aunt, for indeed, I am on the rack to learn what this woman has to say to me."

"You will not exclude me long?" petitioned poor Miss Alicia.

"Only so long as is absolutely necessary for the punctual de-

livery of my commission, Madam. I am as anxious as you can be to have the matter over, for pressing affairs call me to another place."

Miss Alicia retired, but only to the next apartment. Strong were her yearnings to listen at the door to the discourse in which she had been denied a share; but her high and pure sense of honour struggled with her feminine, and, under her circumstances, almost allowable curiosity, and finally she rejected the temptation.

It would have done her no good had she yielded, however. The moment she had passed out of the chamber, the woman latched and bolted the door, and, stepping somewhat nearer to Eliza, held out a letter to her, as she said—

"This, Madam, is for you, and from your father."

"From my father!" cried Eliza, snatching it, her whole attention diverted from the person of the bearer.

"Even so, Madam. It may seem strange in your eyes that a person of my appearance should be employed to hand you so important a document—one, indeed, upon the safe conveyance of which you will learn how much depends. But, in the present times, the person least likely to be suspected it the most proper to be chosen, and I am therefore its bearer. Read it, Madam, and read it quickly. Turn to the window; there is yet daylight enough for the perusal—time will be lost by calling for candles."

Eliza quickly adopted the hint, and with all the eagerness of hope and fear ran over the contents of the epistle, which were as follows:—

"My Dearest Child,

"A deep-laid plan has for some time been in preparation chiefly by one desperate individual, to get up some plausible evidence of a connexion between me and the insurgents, so that I may be dealt with as a traitor to the State. And I fear that from the short time allowed me for my defence, as well as from the fact that I have to encounter private malignity at the hands of many around me, it will be impossible to establish my innocence of the unfounded charge.

"But check your rising terrors. I would not so abruptly communicate this intelligence, did I believe that the results were to be fatal to me. Except a temporary shade upon my character, and a short separation from you, I have nothing to fear. My arbitrary judges may indeed declare me guilty; more, may sentence me to death. But their sentence *will not be executed* upon your father. I am certain of escaping it. From them indeed, I expect no mercy.

But Almighty Providence, the friend of the innocent, has raised up a champion for us in our great trouble. We are to be saved—you as well as I, Eliza.—(You from worse than the fate to which I am nominally doomed.) And by a person, the last upon the earth we could have calculated on for such a service. I cannot venture to insert his name: if I did, and if my note miscarried, his destruction as well as mine would be inevitable. Enough, that I fully and tranquilly depend not only upon his friendship, but upon the plans he has formed for my safety. This night I shall be freed from prison. Before morning dawns I shall be in a place of concealment beyond the reach of my enemies, where I am to remain only while our friend causes powerful application to be made to Government for a speedy reversal of my sentence. Then, my character justified, and my person safe, I can resume my station in society.

"Now, attend, Eliza. All this is not only possible, but certain, provided you unhesitatingly adopt the advice which I am about to offer you:—decline that advice, or even dally with it, and our ruin is not less certain. But, first, a few words of explanation.

"I have said that you also were threatened with a terrible fate—one more terrible than that prepared for me. This is but too true. It has been attempted to seduce you to —— I will not—cannot write any more positive allusion to the diabolical matter; even prudence again reminds me that, for a reason before given, I had better not do so. But credit the solemn words of your father, uttered on no light grounds. Destruction surrounds you in your present unprotected situation:—avoid it—fly from it, instantly and without hesitation—that is the advice I said I would give. Prepare to escape privately from Enniscorthy, this very night, to an asylum which is ready to receive you. And now let me add why your father's safety depends on the decision you make. If you hesitate to obey me, I must, after my escape from prison, remain, at all hazards, to watch over you, and, as long as I may be allowed to discharge the duty, shield you from the demon who would destroy you. This would almost certainly cause my re-apprehension, and then indeed hope were gone for ever! Obey me, therefore, for both our sakes. I use the strongest terms of command, because none others would convey my urgency. Nor do I yet deem, Eliza, that I have forfeited over my child the authority of a parent.

"Prepare yourself, I can only repeat, and freely trust yourself into the hands of those whom I shall send to guide your flight.

After you leave Enniscorthy some distance behind, I will myself meet and accompany you to your journey's end, disguised however from the knowledge of a strange man who is to lead us by retired ways with which I am unacquainted, and to whom, as he does not share my confience, it might be fatal to give the slightest suspicion of my identity. Farther, prudence, and the important results which are at stake, will oblige us to interchange few words on the road, and those in whispers. I must even try to assume a feigned voice, lest the man may be acquainted with my usual accents. In the minutest particular, caution is indispensable—for, recollect how much depends upon perhaps our least action! Your happiness—honour—life—the life of your father, and (I should have considered it before my own) that of the noble-hearted friend who dares all to succour and save us!

"I must not conclude without another injunction. This communication is to be kept strictly secret from your poor aunt. Nor must she know of your arrangements for leaving Enniscorthy,—nor that you are to leave it. She might fall into the hands of your enemy, and in her present distressed and enfeebled state, drop some word that were sufficient to re-transfer us all to the fate we try to avoid. Besides, she could not endure the fatigue for which you are better able to nerve yourself. Farewell, my dearest Eliza!—The bearer is fully in my confidence,—Farewell!—May the Almighty Father protect the dear child of the fond and anxious

"T. H."

Shivering terror, astonishment, joy, hope, doubt—every variety of feeling, appeared by turns on Eliza's brow, as she perused this epistle. She laid it on the old-fashioned seat of the window; she put her hands upon her eyes—the woman saw her start expressively. Again she examined the writing; it surely was her father's hand—less distinct and elegant, indeed, than that to which she had been accustomed; but hurry and agitation might account for the difference. She hastily read the letter a second time, and doubted more strongly than before. She could not tell why, but, to her mind, a certain unauthentic strain ran through it; and she felt inclined to refuse assent, or even consideration, to the extraordinary propositions it contained.

But chilly alarm possessed her at the reflection that still it might have been written by her father. If so—and if she hesitated to obey its commands!—Eliza sank overpowered at the thought. A third time she took it up. Now she had little or no doubt of the

hand, and the diction and style seemed less strange. She looked towards the bearer of the important writing. The woman had resumed her station at the door, and Eliza could see nothing of her person and features, enveloped as both still were in her ample cloak, and farther obscured by the deepening twilight. It occurred to her to ask her visitor to put down the hood of the mantle, but good feeling checked the impulse; and indeed good sense too. For, if the letter were genuine, its bearer must be trust-worthy, inasmuch as the writer had said she fully possessed his confidence.

After a moment of useless observation, Eliza faltered—"Am I to receive no instructions beyond what this letter conveys?"

"Any circumstance with which I am acquainted, and not interdicted from mentioning, you may know, Madam."

"Have you no other note?—From no other person?"

"I have, indeed, been charged with another note, Madam. Strange that I should forget an important part of my commission!" and pacing forward, she put a folded scrap of paper into Eliza's hand, hastily written over with a pencil, and containing these lines:—

"My Dearest Love,

"Fear nothing on my account. The only cause for my arrest is the pretext to separate us; but I cannot be detained from you longer than to-night. My only apprehensions are, that in the mean time you may be exposed to the machinations of a villain. Keep yourself concealed from his view—fly from him—escape him, by every means, until you are protected by,

"Your adoring husband,

"William Judkin."

"Of the genuineness of this note, Eliza had not a doubt. Her heart grew tranquil, almost joyful, with hope. She laid the scrap of paper upon the more lengthened epistle, which it seemed fully to authenticate, and looked round for writing materials.

"There is one matter, Madam, which Sir William may not have mentioned."

"Pray, pray state it!"

"This night he also regains his liberty."

"May I not ask who is the blessed agent of his and my happiness?"

"I can only tell you, Madam, that he shall be freed from Enniscorthy castle by the same hand that helps to open the door of your father's dungeon."

"Then, perhaps, I may meet him along with my father?"

"No; that is improbable—impossible! He cannot escape for an hour after Sir Thomas Hartley. And yet"—the speaker paused, and her voice momentarily took a cadence that started Eliza—"and yet, you *may* see him to-night!"

"To whom do I speak?" Eliza half arose in anxious misgiving.

"To one who will befriend you and yours, young lady;" and Eliza's romantic surmise proved faulty.

"'Tis time I were back to your friends, Madam. Have you resolved upon your answer to Sir Thomas Hartley?"

"I have—I will implicitly obey my dear father. You shall convey to him my written answer to that effect."

"Is not your verbal answer sufficient, Madam? He has informed you that he confides in me;—I may, therefore, be trusted with it. In a case where the utmost precaution is necessary, the less writing the better. I do not fear that I shall be suspected during my visits backward and forward from your father to you. But the chance is possible, and therefore, by all means to be avoided, when a single line under your hand might destroy all our arrangements."

"You are right," answered Eliza, gaining still more confidence from the seeming carefulness and earnestness of the negotiator.

"You are right, good woman: remember, then, the very words I say. But first, can you tell me the names of certain persons alluded to in my father's letter?"

"I could, Madam; but for the present, I am not permitted to do so."

"Then take my message—I am well, rejoiced at my father's prospect of safety, and will implicitly obey him."

"Depend on my delivering it, word for word, Madam. One other observation is necessary. Sir Thomas Hartley has not, I believe, mentioned the hour at which you are to hear from him again?"

"No! or it could not have escaped me."

"At ten o'clock, then, Madam, you will be prepared for your departure from Enniscorthy. Attire yourself for a journey on horseback. Be prudent and firm: keep your own counsel, and all will go well. For the purpose of baffling your aunt's curiosity, you had better invent some probable story."

"What? woman!" interrupted Eliza, "counsel me to utter an untruth! My father never instructed you to do so; nor would he give his confidence to one whose nature and habits permit such

advice. Ah! your letters may be forgeries! There are such things well executed."

"Then you waver in your resolution?"

"I—I know not what to do."

"Your message shall be faithfully delivered, young lady. At ten, be ready to steal from this house with me. Else, be accessory to your father's death!" With this the abrupt stranger turned to leave the room.

"Stay!" cried Eliza—"you will also see the writer of the pencilled note?"

"Yes, Madam."

"To-night?"

"I hope so."

"And can also deliver a message to him from me?"

"To him,—from you?"

"Yes, from me to my beloved husband."

The woman's last answers had been given very calmly, though expressively. But it was in a rude, if not fierce tone, that she quickly answered—"No! not a breath!" So saying, she left Eliza alone.

. . . .

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Her aunt did not give Eliza much time for solitary reflection: and her question of—"Well, dear child, what—what have been the tidings?" proposed a difficulty. During our heroine's whole life she had never spoken an untruth. She had never had anything to conceal from the indulgent and virtuous friends about her; and now, by habit as by nature, she recoiled from the notion of deceiving her aunt with the "probable story," just recommended to her adoption. Nor could she be silent; how, then, answer?—"Plainly," was her conclusion. And referring to her father's letter, or to the letter that purported to come from her father, she read out that single injunction, which commanded her not to communicate to Miss Alicia the intelligence it contained.

The old lady was naturally much surprised, and startled, and grieved, and alarmed. "What could be her brother's motive for refusing his confidence, in misfortune, to one from whom, in days

of happiness, he had never withheld it? Her dear child would at least explain that."

No—because by so doing she must absolutely reveal the nature of the secret deposited exclusively in her breast. "Very extraordinary still; unkind, cruel of Sir Thomas! Well—but what, generally speaking, were the situation and the hopes of the poor prisoners?" Their situation not dangerous, and their hopes strong. "Praised be the Lord;—oh, for ever praised:" and the good lady knelt down, in the sincere fervency of her heart. "Sir Thomas's letter answered for the dear Sir William as well as for himself?" Not so—but another letter did; and Eliza handed the pencilled note to Miss Alicia.

This partial confidence, slight as it really was, operated upon the querulous old lady as does, upon a fretful child, the permission to catch up some plaything of little moment, instead of the valuable article for which he had at first raised his tiny cries. While dwelling, word after word, upon Sir William's scrawl, Miss Alice forgot how ill she had been treated by the withholding the more important document from her scrutiny. Her heart swelled with pity, admiration, and love of the writer. "The considerate, the fond, the gallant Sir William! How her soul thanked him for the comfort of that little note! But—Heaven, in its mercies, protect us! Could it, and Sir Thomas's letter too, have been written only to give assurance to Eliza and herself? Could the dear prisoners, in compassion for them, agree to communicate hopes that had no real foundation?" Eliza, at much length, combatted the unreasonableness, as well as the refined misery-seeking of this conjecture. "Well; thank God, her darling child thought so; 'twas a great blessing that such was her opinion. Yet, again—and she prayed a good Providence to prove her fears vain—might not Sir Thomas's letter be a forgery? Nay, even this note." She drew near to the lights, and, adjusting her spectacles, re-examined the pencilled lines—"they were just like Sir William's hand, and no more—just as like as a skilful knave could easily make them. Blessed Goodness! was her dear child quite, quite sure of the handwriting of the letter?"

This surmise and question proved more distressing to Eliza than any of the preceding ones had done; yet she answered, that, indeed, she had very carefully scrutinized the letter, and her conviction was that it must be genuine. As to Sir William's note, she entertained not the slightest doubt of it. His hand was a very peculiar one, and could not possibly be imitated, so as to deceive her

at least. In short, her dear aunt unnecessarily afflicted herself by such surmises. "And now, dearest Madam," continued Eliza, "I will retire for a little while to reflect and to pray; for I need the most cool exercise of my mind, and the most merciful help Heaven may be pleased to vouchsafe me. Accordingly she left the chamber, and in solitude endeavoured to form, positively, her determination.

"The one desperate individual" who had plotted against her father's life, could be no other than the "enemy" who had also sought her destruction—who, in fact, in order to get her into his power, had diabolically contrived the arrest of Sir Thomas and of her husband.—"But," said Eliza, detecting herself arguing in a circle, "if I take any assertion from that letter, so as to reason on it, I must first suppose the epistle genuine, and then my dilemma would end at once. And, hold—do I not here see started the strongest possible reason to believe it written by my father? If a forgery, it can have been forged only by that 'one desperate individual,' that detestable 'enemy.' Would he thus describe himself?"

She started up, delighted at the thought. Joined to its other internal evidence, there could no longer be a doubt of the authenticity of the letter. She would, without farther hesitation,—nay, in hope and joy of heart, act upon it.

"And yet," still whispered her womanly prudence and fears—"a consummate villain would hit even upon that finesse, in order to make it look more like the truth—in order to secure his one long-sought object, for which he has already bid adieu to character in every shape, in order"—and she dropped trembling into her chair—"in order to beguile a wretched woman, far from her protectors, and from all human help!"

For some time Eliza could but shudder and shrink at the bare idea of committing herself to the guidance of the questionable person who had delivered the letter, to hasten, at an advanced hour of the night, most probably, into the very arms of destruction.

"But here is the awful question," she continued, laying down the document after she had again pored over it—"the probabilities, whether it be genuine or not, are pretty nearly equal. The life of my father *may*, then, be in my hands; and should I hesitate? If, through my selfish fears, the beloved author of my existence were again to fall into his enemies' grasp, could peace of mind ever visit me? Must I not regard myself as that coward daughter who feared to risk a chance of personal injury for the equal chance of saving her father? Oh, God!" she cried, falling on her knees, and stretch-

ing her arms towards Heaven, while the ennobling nature of the struggle, and the deep-felt reliance upon Him whom she supplicated, gave a holy expression to her beautiful features—"Father of All, guide my feeble reason, enlighten my imperfect nature, raise my selfish heart, that, in this first necessity for a proper exercise of my judgment, I may decide as thou wouldst have me do!"

Covering her face with her hands, she bent humbly before the Great Power she invoked, and for some time remained silently in that position. When she arose and seated herself, her countenance, though pale, was calm and firm. Not without a mild glow of joyfulness, she felt as if the Mighty Intelligence, of which her soul was an emanation, had been present to it, and imparted the power to decide. As persons will do in solitude, who have come to a fixed resolution, after strong mental combat, Eliza breathed out her purpose aloud. "The risk shall be run. His arm will shield even amid danger, the child who would save her father. In the name of God, let me prepare for my journey! It cannot lead me into harm. And now I do not fear my enemy. There is a strength given to me beyond his strength. Either we are not to meet at all, or I shall overcome him if we do."

Wearing a brow of steady resolve, she joined her aunt, and spent nearly the two succeeding hours in endeavouring to inspire the feeble old lady with hope and confidence. Meantime, to say that, even after all her high-minded determination, her own bosom remained unagitated by relapsing doubts and fears, would be to exaggerate Eliza into a commonplace heroine indeed.

About half-past nine o'clock, an account of the result of her father's trial was brought to her by a messenger sent from the inn. Sentence of death had been recorded against him. Hesitation once more passed away. She would dare everything for the merest chance of warding off the execution of that sentence.

Of the going or coming of the particular person who conveyed these tidings, Miss Alicia had been unaware. Eliza privately employed him, and as privately met him upon his return from the castle; so that her aunt could ask no questions concerning whatever intelligence he might communicate. To other individuals, dispatched with the knowledge of the old lady, her niece now sent orders not to approach the inn. And as she sat at the side of the bed where poor Miss Alicia at length lay powerless, her feeble eyes closing in slumber which she vainly resisted, and presently opening to inquire if the messenger had returned, Eliza was thus enabled to withhold information that, while she cherished a hope it might

prove harmless, she feared could not at present be given to her aunt, without endangering her life.

Eliza stealthily looked at her watch. It wanted but a few minutes to ten. Finding her heart sinking, she once more knelt, and once more gained resolution. Still on her knees, she softly took her aunt's languid hand, and kissed it. Then she arose, and cautiously bent over the bed to regard the long-loved features which she might never again behold. Miss Alicia slumbered, but as Eliza a second time impulsively caught up her hand, awoke, and their eyes met.

"I hope you feel sufficiently warm, my dearest aunt," she said, in a choking voice, while she ardently pressed the hand she held. Miss Alicia's reply was scarcely audible, yet it spoke gratitude and assurance, and her weak fingers feebly returned the pressure of which they were just sensible. Her eyes closed again. Eliza stole out of the chamber, gained her own, and hastily proceeded to array herself for her perilous journey.

A riding-habit formed no part of the attire she had brought with her from Hartley Court; but she could clothe herself warmly, and not very inconveniently. As the last article of dress was arranged, the clock on the lobby began to strike ten. Again she looked at her watch; it also indicated the momentous hour. Instinctively she pressed her right-hand to her heart, while yet the strokes rang on, and turning round faced the closed door of her chamber. The tenth stroke had scarcely been told, when it was followed by a single heavy knock at the outside of the door. She started, caught her breath shortly; but, after a pause, desired the challenger to come in.

"'Tis I: come you out to me," answered the low voice of her former visitor.

At once closing with her purpose, boldly and courageously, she opened the door, and saw the woman standing in the gloom at the head of the stairs. Eliza held a light in her hand.

"Leave the candle in the room, it may draw observation. Then come closer here, while we exchange a word."

Eliza passively obeyed these directions.

"By your preparations for the road, I see you have not altered your mind," continued the woman, when they stood together at the stair-head in the dark.

"I have not," replied Eliza, firmly—"lead on, I follow you. If I am betrayed, Heaven will punish my betrayers."

A slight scoffing sound, made by the breath, escaped the woman before she continued;—"You have nothing to fear. Act reso-

lutely, and you will bless the night I led you from this roof. I even bring you assurances of my honesty. What words are these?—'God bless you! my love, and may you live to bless the husband of your choice longer than did your sainted mother.'"

Eliza indeed recollected them, as words addressed to her that very morning by her father, while she hung upon his neck after the marriage ceremony.

"And you ought to know this ring," resumed the woman, giving one;—"step into your chamber, and look at it."

Eliza did so, and at once recognised it as her father's.

"Nay, I forgot," said the woman's voice at the door, as she flung a note across the narrow room, over Eliza's shoulder, so that it rested upon the table—"read that, and then delay no longer."

Eliza tore it open, and read—

"My Beloved Child,

"I am free. I wait to see you under a safe roof; then I must hasten to my own concealment—only for a few days, however. Follow the bearer, a tall woman in a dark-grey mantle. She will guide you to

"Your happy, but anxious Father,

"T. H."

"I follow you," whispered Eliza earnestly, to the guide, after having again joined her in the shadow of the lobby.

The woman, making a sign to be cautious, looked down the stairs, and listened. Then, giving another sign, she descended. Eliza softly trod in her steps, and, without being observed by any one belonging to the house, found herself in the streets of Enniscorthy.

The guide rapidly paced through the town, our heroine still following. Bands of yeomen, showing rather alarmed anticipation than formidable preparation, patrolled the streets, in expectancy of the attack we have already noticed. As yet, only imperfectly acquainted with the theory of warlike defence, their sense of the coming danger was chiefly manifested when they stopped to listen to an unusual noise, or cried out to the inmates of the houses to extinguish their lights; or issued their mandates, that all persons not authorised to bear arms, and wearing the very suspicious garb of civil attire, should remain within-doors; or gave whatever other orders they vaguely, and often erroneously, supposed might conduce to success in combat. And upon one or two occasions, Eliza's conductress showed great presence of mind, in so guiding her

charge as to avoid detection or questioning, by these anxious and zealous patroles.

They safely passed the lower part of the town, and glided through the thatched suburb, where all was still, and every one had seemingly retired to repose, although within every darkned hovel many an ear listened earnestly for the expected sounds of rush and tumult. At the very last cabin of the outlet, the woman halted, and tapped at its door. The latch was upraised, and a man appeared.

"Bring out the horses," said the guide.

"Where is my father?" asked Eliza.

"Hush!" was her companion's sole reply.

"He engaged to meet me, and he is not here," urged the anxious daughter.

"Be cautious of your words, Madam. None must hear you name his name; fearful danger would attend it."

The man brought out two horses.

"You will mount one of them, Madam," continued the woman. Eliza hesitated. "You will mount, or your father returns to Enniscorthy, and is lost," she continued.

"I have ventured thus far, and I will brave the result, in Heaven's name," thought Eliza, and she gained her saddle. Her companion was quickly seated in the other.

"Still follow me, and fear not," she whispered, and put her animal to a brisk pace.

Eliza was a good horsewoman; but she found herself equalled, if not excelled, by her guide. Their rapid journey continued in silence. After about a quarter of an hour's riding, during which Eliza perceived that their course first lay northward from Enniscorthy, and then wheeled a short distance to its south-east, just on the ascent of a little one-arched bridge they suddenly halted. The banks of the stream it spanned were thickly wooded, forming a gloomy ravine, in which the dark summer's night grew darker, and which afforded a fit place of concealment to any one careful of avoiding observation.

"Advance!" said Eliza's companion, still speaking in a controllod voice, although she turned it towards the dusky dell.

The noise of horses' feet was heard within the gloom; two mounted men emerged from it, and were shortly on the road. As they approached, the woman addressed Eliza in a whisper.

"I now leave you, Madam, under your father's protection. Be not doubtful, even though a daughter's eye can scarce recognise him in his disguise. In the short time afforded for all our arrangements,

it was impossible to find at hand a guide for your and your father's journey, who might be intrusted with the knowledge of your father's person. His present companion does not therefore know him: beware how you betray the secret to the man's observation. Some whispers may be exchanged; but every thing like conversation must be avoided. Farewell, Madam! I return, in speed, to liberate Sir William Judkin. You and I shall meet again." Turning her horse's head, she rode back towards Enniscorthy.

In the person who now drew up beside Eliza, yet at some distance from her, she endeavoured to recognise her father. Although some doubts yet agitated her heart, she believed it was indeed he. He wore the great outside coat of a peasant, of which the stiff, standing-collar closed before his face, while a broad-brimmed hat flapped down into his eyes. But, after silently regarding him through the darkness of the night, Eliza was almost sure she caught the peculiar mien of her beloved parent. And it could be no vulgar hand which managed the spirited horse he bestrode.

While yet she looked, he spoke in a whisper. "My beloved child has acted like herself. None but my Eliza could have thus proved her own character. But I reckoned on it, when I addressed her. By courageously exercising it, she has saved us both."

"Why, then, tunder-an'-turf," interrupted the guide, rudely pushing forward; his manner proclaiming a low-bred, and not a gentle peasant. "Misther, whatever it's plaisin to you to call yourself, if you're goin' to go, don't stop spakin down in your throat there, becase you have a wheezin', all the night long."

"You see we must be cautious," again whispered the object of this remonstrance. "I am not skilful at a feint; and though I strove to adopt a natural tone while disguising my real one, this man at once discovers it to be an affectation."

Eliza had listened in vain to catch some cadence of her father's voice. Now, however, she thought she should know one or two accents of this second whisper.

"My dear Father," she replied, as softly as the softest voice could breathe the words, when the man had re-assumed his place in front, "I would not deserve the name of daughter had I disobeyed your command. I implored the council of my God, and, I think, acted under the dictates He vouchsafed to whisper to my heart."

The rude guide again became impatient, and Eliza was now addressed, not in a cautious tone, by a voice which was quite strange to her. "Well, let us proceed as fast as our horses can travel; we have no time to lose."

"Faith! an' you may say that, Misther-wid-the-tongue-in-the-wizen, if you don't want to wait for the daylight to kitch us. A thing, I've a notion, you'd rather let alone."

"On, then, Sir!" and the party set forward. Eliza's companion rode within a cautious distance of her bridle; his attentions, as far as it seemed prudent to bestow them, evincing all the kindness and watchfulness of sincere affection. The rapid rate at which they held on, would of itself have prevented continued discourse, and only a few whispers still were interchanged between them. If they began a dialogue, the guide surely slacked his pace, whatever might be his motive, evidently that he might overhear it; curious perhaps to ascertain the identity of his fellow-travellers. But upon the appearance of any such attempt, increased caution became necessary. Eliza's companion also seemed of himself inclined to fits of reflection, and half-checked sighs often escaped him.

On one occasion, while thus apparently abstracted, and while the guide seemed less inquisitive than usual, Eliza addressed him. "You appear depressed, my dear Sir."

"Eliza, when removed from you, even though for a short time, I must tremble with anxiety and apprehension."

"May I not know the exact nature of the danger to which you will still believe me exposed, Sir? If once aware of it, I could better nerve myself against it."

"You will, alas! know it too soon. At present—see—it is impossible."

The man turned round to say, that as the road grew better, they must still increase their speed. When the next respite occurred, Eliza gently whispered, "I am naturally anxious about my husband, Sir."

Her companion started.

"Your husband!—hah!—Certainly, certainly, you must be, Eliza;" and he was silent.

"My words seem to have startled you, Sir?"

"Startled me? no, child. Why should they? Why should you not be anxious?"

"I have heard that this night he, too, shou'd escape from prison."

"You have heard truly."

"And that it was probable I should see him immediately after."

"See him! to-night! no, no, no. Pardon me, Eliza, I cannot answer without agitation—dreadful agitation. It may be a long time before you see him."

"Why so, my dear Sir? You alarm me."

"Your question involves the former explanation which you required of me, and therefore cannot at present be answered—Judge for yourself.—This fellow again interrupts us."

"Heaven protect us all! I see we are all yet surrounded by some frightful danger," said Eliza, and they pushed on in silence.

This was the longest discourse that occurred during a rapid journey of about fourteen Irish miles. Most frequently they struck from the high-road into narrow ways, and often swept over fields through which no beaten track marked the route. It is not in this place necessary to present the features of the country, now under the shadow of night. Enough to observe, that the travellers hurried through scenery of the same general character with that which has elsewhere been given as common to the County of Wexford; up and down ascents and descents, within view, though indistinctly seen, of many eminences, bare or wooded; and sometimes through tracts nearly barren. For, even so late as about thirty years ago, no part of Ireland had arrived at the degree of cultivation it now can boast.

With tolerable accuracy, it has been ascertained, that nearly at the hour when Sir William Judkin set off from Hartley Court, in a vain search after his bride, to the town of Enniscorthy, that young and lovely bride was, much fatigued with her long and rapid ride, ascending a winding avenue which led to a respectable-looking mansion seated on a green ascent. As she turned her head over her shoulder, Eliza saw to her left an expanse of water, dimly shown by the reflection of the sky over its bosom, which could not be called lightsome, but rather just a shade less dark than the hills and plains it overhung. Covering another green eminence, opposite to that on which the house was situated, and ascending from the edge of the water, appeared, vague and shapeless, a massive pile of ruined building.

"Where are we, Sir?" she asked.

"Yonder, my dear child, is your house of refuge. To your left are the ruins of Dunbrody Abbey, which the morning light will present to you as a noble object in the landscape. I will but see you to the threshold of your asylum, Eliza. Then, while the darkness yet favours my escape to my own place of concealment, we must bid each other adieu."

"And whither do you go, Sir?"

"I must be seen only by one confidential person," answered her companion, as if evading her last whispered question, or perhaps he had not heard it,—"to no other will I entrust my life. Believe me,

Eliza, my great anxiety to preserve that life is with a view of making it useful to you. For it may still happen that you will require my guidance and guardianship."

"Your words again alarm me, Sir.—Oh, speak, Sir! my husband!"

The guide had knocked loudly at the door of the house, to which they were now very near. It opened, lights appeared from it, and the man, turning in his saddle, seemed closely watching them.

"We must part, Eliza; I leave you in safety—It depends on yourself to continue secure from danger. Stir not from the house until you hear tidings of me again.—Farewell!—I must not even touch your hand, my child—the fellow watches us too closely—Nor can I venture nearer to the light of the door. God Almighty bless you!"

"And protect you, my dear Sir," said Eliza, as he turned his horse's head.

A man and woman, both elderly, holding candles in their hands, and having the appearance of respectable domestics, now stood bowing and curtseying to Eliza, at the hall-door. The man stepped out to assist her to dismount. When she touched the ground, she turned round to catch a parting glance of her father. He also had dismounted, at some distance, and seemed preparing to bestride a fresh horse. The obsequious servant ushered her up the steps to the house. At the door she again looked back. It seemed the same figure that a second time met her eye, indistinctly discerned through the gloom. Except that, along with the peasant's loose great-coat, a horse-hair helmet now took place of the former slouched hat. The variation startled her. She gazed more attentively. The person stooped as if to examine one of the hoofs of his horse. In the action, his helmet fell off. The lights held by the domestics streaming out at the same moment through the darkness, fell on his uncovered head, and fitfully revealed to Eliza a much-dreaded countenance. Stunned at the view, or perhaps, fancy, she staggered into the hall; faintness was closing on her heart. At the thought of whose house she entered—the house of Talbot—of the individual she believed she had just beheld—Eliza made an effort, however, to rush out. The heavy door was suddenly shut on her, and retreat cut off.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THAT she had been betrayed—that the letter delivered by the woman had not come from her father—that the companion of her rapid ride was not her father—that, remote from friendly aid, she was in the power of her enemy, while the two dear beings for whom she had dared all, and lost all, still remained in prison, or perhaps, had by this time ignominiously ended their lives—these were the conclusions that instantly forced themselves upon Eliza.

And, with quick combination, everything now seemed to add proof of the appalling facts. Instead of her father attempting to use a feigned voice, she contemplated his treacherous representative as trying to imitate her father's real one, and depending upon her credulous belief of the first case, to hide his occasional, indeed general, failure. The interference of the guide to hinder their protracted discourse on the road, had been planned, as part of the system of deception. Her companion's frequent fits of abstraction, and his expressive sighs, as they rode along, indicated, not the anxiety of a parent, but the presumptuous aspirations of a lover, with, perhaps, some struggles of remorse, or at least, of doubts and fears of her future estimation of him, or of the consequences of his outrageous conduct. How could she have been so infatuated as not to have properly understood his start and agitation when she mentioned her husband's name, and his whole evident disinclination to interchange a word concerning Sir William?

Trembling upon a seat in the hall, horror and despair wholly possessed her at the first view of her situation. But she brought to mind that, before leaving the inn, she had resolved to take her chance of either of two results, and to brave her fate, should the present one ensue. This thought rallied her, at least out of a state of mere weakness. She reflected, that if she was lost, so were the only beings with whom she could ever wish to share life; and Eliza told her heart to prepare for destruction with them. With them? Nay, for them! The idea completed her triumph over her position. Despair changed into desperation; terror and yielding into the stern pride of wretchedness.

"Won't you walk up-stairs to your nice room, my lady?" asked the female servant, in a very respectful and even tender voice.

Eliza raised her eyes and closely scanned her two attendants, as the one curtseyed to the ground, and the other bowed profoundly.

Both were attired, and demeaned themselves, as decent upper-servants of that day, and nothing about either gave the notion that she was immediately in the hands of those who would treat her rudely or even unkindly. On the contrary, if appearance could at all be trusted, Eliza's recent experience seemed to warn her that it seldom could, the man and woman equally showed a benevolent, respectful sympathy with her situation, which might well inspire some confidence.

She arose from the hall-seat, and stood firmly, to her full height, before them, as she inquired, with calm dignity,

"In whose house am I?"

"In a house, my lady, where hurt or harum daarn't come nigh a hair o' your head," answered the female, still curtseying.

"But who is its owner?"

"We're bound up not to spake about that till the time comes, my lady. Only its owned by one that 'ud turn the world inside out to make pleasure for you, ma'am, and that 'ud no more hurt you, my purty lady, than he'd chop the head off of his own showlders."

"Answer directly to my question—Does this house belong to Captain Talbot, and is it by his agency I have been conveyed hither?"

The man and woman looked at each other, as if mutually endeavouring to ascertain the reply that should be given, and Eliza began to give up her slight confidence in them. But perhaps they were only surprised at her question; she would see.

"We don't know the bould Capt'n you're spakin' about, ma'am, no more than we know the man in the moon. Who is he, I wondher, Robert?" said the woman.

"Who is he?" echoed Robert, hesitatingly, "I b'lieve I hard tell o' sich a Capt'n, Nelly, some time or other. But, my lady—" and he bowed his powdered head very low, until his loyal queu protruded horizontally from his shoulders—"if it's in your mind to think that ould Robert manes you anything worse than goin' about this house, on his two bare knees, to do every command you'll put on him, may them same two legs be cut off this moment, and thrun out in the yard for the dog's supper. Have thrust in us, my lady; do, my lady. We're honest ould sarv'nts, my lady, an' we'll lose the life for you, dhrop by dhrop."

"Ah, then, my purty, darling lady, do, an' you won't be sorry—" urged the female, with so much earnestness that tears, sincere or artificial, stood in her eyes; and Eliza remarked that while Robert spoke his voice sounded quaveringly. The two old domestics must

be very excellent actors, if she was not, to them, at least, an object of pity, and, so far as they were able to afford it, protection.

Almost instinctively, therefore, at the woman's repeated entreaties, she ascended the stairs, her attendant now smiling very officiously and benevolently, and seeming one of the most affectionate beings alive.

"And here it is, my lady," entering a large sleeping chamber; "and here's as nice a bed as 'ud do the Queen o' Morocco to lie down in; but no wise too good for the lodger it'll have to-night. I'll bring you tay, my lady, or supper, or I'll help you to undhress, or any other comfort you'd have afther your journey, only say it, my lady."

"Yet you persist in refusing to inform me into whose house I have been conveyed?"

"We couldn't be tellin' that yet, my lady; indeed we couldn't. An' it wouldn't be for your good to know it, the prasent time. He's the thrue friend of you and yours, an' don't be unasy, my honey lady. I'm a mother, an' the mother o' daughters, too, an' I'll give you lave to say that any one of *them* is a disgrace to their mother, and by their mother's own fault, too, if ever you find me doing or saying towards you what I should'nt do or say."

"Can you tell me anything of my father?"

"An, then, nothing very particklar," answered the attendant, adroitly hiding some sudden agitation; "only Robert was sayin' he was safe an' sound, my lady."

"Perhaps you have heard Robert mention another person—Sir William Judkin?"

"Never a word, then, my lady; but I'm not curos, all out."

"Well—I do not need assistance in preparing for bed—leave the lights, and retire."

Eliza did not, indeed, seek repose. Although her body was fatigued and harassed, she could not quell her mind to that quiet necessary for sleep. Besides, in her present very doubtful situation, waking and watching were her part, rather than slumber.

Had she indeed seen her dreaded foe? Was she in his power—in his house? Might it not be possible that her boding, disturbed state of mind only conferred upon other features, amid the darkness and hurry of the hour, a likeness to those which haunted her imagination? The appearance and manner of her two attendants certainly strengthened the conjecture.

But why should they refuse to name the proprietor of the mansion in which she was? If they did not fear that she would dis-

like to hear his name, whence arose the necessity for their pertinaceous silence? And what name but one could sound odious to her? Again Eliza relapsed into all her first apprehensions of treachery. Again the picture of her father and her husband, brought to an ignominious death, rose so vividly before her fancy, that she started up as if to confront a real occurrence.

Thus employed during the few hours of the night, the summer morning found her still waking; and, notwithstanding her previous resolves to nerve herself against the event, still wretched and trembling. Her eyes were red with scalding tears, as she arose mechanically, at the first summons of the dawn, and looked from her window. Although the old abbey of Dunbrody, an extensive mass of monastic ruin, would at another time have interested her, Eliza heeded it not. Nor, although a great portion of her enjoyment of life had hitherto been drawn from the beauties of outward Nature did she now dwell with pleasure on the fine expanse of water beneath the old ruins' green ascent, nor transfer her admiring glance to the wooded heights, near and remote, some vaguely defined in the yet lingering mists of the night, some glowing and sparkling in a contrast of sunny clearness.

The uncertainty of her situation chiefly harassed her. That she was the victim of a plan to separate her from her only friends while they should be destroyed in her absence, seemed the mos likely case. Yet it was not fully proved. And if, taking it for granted, she should attempt and succeed in an escape, and if, after all, it turned out to be the fact, that her late movements and her present situation were indeed guided and chosen by her father, the result of her precipitation might be terrible. Then, in reality, she might fall into the hands of the enemy, from whom it had been her parent's care to shield her. Then, indeed, that parent might be exposed by her to inevitable ruin.

Presently, a guiding thought struck upon her mind. Sir William's note—which she could not bring herself to suspect as strongly as she did the letter purporting to come from her father—advised concealment until he could fly to her assistance; thus he seemed to have been aware of a plan to convey her to a place of safety. If so, he would be with her in the course of that day. For the woman, and the person calling himself her father, had permitted her to reckon confidently upon Sir William's deliverance from prison before the morning. Eliza would await his coming in resignation.

She would be watchful, too; observe more closely the real characters of the servants in attendance upon her, and, if possible, gain from them more information than they had yet given.

Having thus arrived at something like a conclusion as to the course of action it befitted her to pursue, Eliza's mind grew comparatively calm, although not with the calm of assurance. For the first time, she cast her eyes observantly around her. She was in a bed-chamber arranged with all the elegance which should distinguish a lady's. Two doors opened from it, one into the landing-place, another, as Eliza ascertained by a glance, into a dressing-room. Both these she secured; and closing the shutters on the beautiful prospect that could not attract her, yielded at last to a natural wish for repose.

But it was a broken slumber that visited her pillow. Her own agonized groan, half-sounding upon her ear, often assumed, corresponding with a frightful scene rapidly conjured up to eke it out, the dying and despairing cries of those she loved; and she would start, and awaken, and rise up on her pillow to fix her eyes on objects that seemed actually present with her. Nature will often, indeed, like a tender nurse, cradle the most wretched to repose, permitting the beguiled fancy to enjoy prospects of bliss of which the waking mind dares not entertain a hope. With Eliza it seemed as if, in cruel sport, true perception was extinguished only for the purpose of presenting to her mind exaggerations of her real misery.

She could not tell how long her unrefreshing sleep had continued, when she was awakened by the noise of some wheeled vehicle, near the house. Rising, in eager anticipation, she flew to the window, opened the shutters, and looked out. It was but a cart passing down the avenue, driven, however, by a man whom, under some circumstance disadvantageous to him, or disagreeable to her, she vaguely remembered to have seen before. In fact, she beheld Sam Stickleg, leaving the house, after having delivered, according to the orders of his chief, the "little thrunk," which, along with Nanny's chest, had helped to load the cart both had driven the previous night from Hartley Court.

Turning from the window, much disappointed, and alarmed afresh, though she knew not distinctly why, at this man's appearance, Eliza heard a cautious step in the dressing-closet. Before she had recovered from her start, a respectful tap sounded at the door inside, and the obsequious voice of her female attendant requested admission. Eliza opened the door, and entered the little apartment. To her surprise it appeared furnished with all the elegancies of a lady's toilet—some of them her own. Her astonishment gained its height, when in a wardrobe to one side, she discovered some of the very clothes she had left behind at Hartley Court.

She demanded an explanation of this mystery. Mrs. Nelly would only inform her, that "the purty things were sent by them that 'ud turn the world inside-out to make pleasure for her."

Eliza, according to her plan, proceeded, as cautiously as she knew how, to elicit from the women the information she had before suppressed. But, except a reiteration that she was in a house where all were her humblest slaves, and where "Robert 'ud give out the last dhrop to keep away hurt or harum from her," Mrs. Nelly guarded her secret. Eliza's suspicions sprang up anew at this obstinate equivocation. Notwithstanding that the old dame seemed so good-natured and even matronly in all her little attentions, still there remained a doubt that she was acting a part of specious dissimulation.

The day was wearing away without any appearance of Sir William Judkin, or any account from him, and Eliza's terrors and misgivings returned in treble force. Yielding to an undefined impulse, she left her chamber, and walked through the house. It was tastily and richly fitted up. The thought of escape occurred very strongly. She looked round to observe if she was alone. Mrs. Nelly, curtseying to her glance, stood at the door of the extensive drawing-room, into which Eliza had last walked. She quitted the apartment, and continued to explore the mansion. The duenna watched her every movement, and Robert also was often encountered, bowing very low whenever Eliza noticed him with her eye, while at each bow his absurd queu poked out from his shoulders.

"I am a prisoner," thought Eliza. "Let me prove it."

She approached the hall-door. It was locked, and the key removed. She required it to be opened, stating her wish to walk towards the ruins.

"Ah, then, my purty, purty lady," cried Mrs. Nelly, "sure you couldn't think o' sich a thing. The runes! ay, the runes an' the runation entirely. How do you know, in the wide world, who'd come across you, my lady? Oh, my gracious goodness! sure that 'ud be goin' in the way o' harum, sure enough."

"I will make the trial. Let me have the key."

"The kay doesn't be wid me, my lady. It's Robert shets the dours; he's a careful man. For goodness sake, my lady, don't go for to put yourself in the way o' them that 'ud do you hurt an' harum."

"That's my affair, good woman. If, indeed, you have been directed to act as my servant, obey my orders."

"Ah, then, it's I got my good commands, my lady, to go undher

your feet wid love an' honour, sure enough. I'd rather to run o' your arrands nor if it was the Queen o' Morocco was bidding me—"

"Why, then, refuse me the key? I will seek Robert myself."

But Robert was not far off. Eliza discovered by Mrs. Nelly's glance that he stood close behind her own back. Quickly turning round, she detected him staring with distended eyes at his fellow-servant, and distorting his mouth into a kind of anxious grin, while by raising his arm, and urging it downward, he enforced the meaning of all his grimace, well understood by Mrs. Nelly, as an exhortation not to give up her point. When suddenly discovered by Eliza going through his dumb show, he started in the utmost confusion, and then observed, giving his usual profound reverence,

"The kay, my lady! the kay o' that dour? oh—ay, the kay. I wondher where is it?" looking beseechingly at Mrs. Nelly, who stretched out both her hands, and said, in her most earnest tone,

"My gracious goodness, my lady, for the love of all the things in the world wide, don't be keepin' hould o' that thought. Sure they'd run away wid you from us."

"They? Who?"

"Who, my lady? That's what we're bound not to tell."

"Then if you refuse to inform me who or what I have to fear, I must doubt your story—and I *will* go forth. The key, Sir?"

"Ah, my lady, we couldn't, we couldn't."

"Then I am a prisoner?"

"A prisoner, my lady! Lord save us, Misthress Nelly, sure her ladyship isn't a prisoner?"

"My gracious goodness, my honey, darlin' lady, an' sure you're not. Only we've as good as sworn down on the buke to keep you out o' hurt or harum."

"An' my lady," seconded Robert, "out o' hurt an' harum you'll be kept. There isn't one undher the clouds this day, or any other day, 'ill daare to look sour at you, while the size o' a midge o' poor ould Robert is to the fore."

"But after all, you will not give the key."

Having received anew a firm though obsequious answer in the negative, Eliza hastened up stairs, all her worst apprehensions overpowering her. Mrs. Nelly followed her quickly with protestations against the thought of "hurt or harum" being meant. Eliza reentered her bedroom, too closely pursued by the old woman to allow of excluding her. Unable to hold out any longer, she sank in a chair, and gave way to her excessive grief. Mrs. Nelly threw herself on her knees before her, and covering her eyes with her

wrought muslin apron, sobbed as loudly as the young lady herself, beseeching her to take comfort, and still vouching that "hurt or harum" were not intended. Nor amid the paroxysm of her sorrows could Eliza avoid remarking that Robert stood outside the door, also declaring that "hurt or harum shouldn't come next or near her."

Days thus elapsed, Eliza remaining a prey to the worst fears, yet not experiencing any misfortune more real than those fears, if her imprisonment within the limits of the house be excepted. Something at last occurred to aggravate the miseries of her situation, and to convince her that she was indeed the captive of a treacherous enemy. Immediately after, came another occurrence that led to her escape from thraldom.

It is often, very often, the fate of the heroines of stories, to be carried off by some desperate man interested in thwarting their schemes of happiness. While we pronounce it irregular, as well as unfortunate, that so many fair and deserving beings should be exposed to this customary calamity of novels, we also admit the adventure to be a very commonplace one. In the present instance, however, the reader's heroine is, in fact and truth, a prisoner, without any invention of ours. Further, we pray him to approach our last chapter, ere he classes us with the general tribe of abductors, (upon paper,) of beauty and innocence.

Ever since the days of chivalry, too, although almost all the ladie-loves of knighthood have been thus treacherously forced into durance by some dwarf, giant, or enchanter, they have, as invariably been rescued and restored to their friends by some gallant arm. Again we must record, in our heroine's behalf, a similar providential occurrence. But it was no knight, with nodding plumes, that achieved the task; no pomp of arms such as used to attend the enlargement of lovely captives, graced the event. It was not even an ordinary lover, in plain clothes, who appeared as the deliverer of our charming Eliza. Her freedom was the work of a very humble, but, as the reader has already judged, a very clever old personage. No other, in fact, than our friend Nanny the Knitter, who, joined to her love for her ward, as she always considered Eliza, might have drawn from the experience of her own late captivity, a benevolent motive to assist all poor prisoners.

At the reader's last parting from Nanny, she was in view of a cabin, under the roof of which she hoped for temporary concealment from the man whom she had many reasons to consider as "the fell destroyer."

This cabin proved to be the abode of a sister of Shawn-a-Gow, who, many years ago, had been married to a small farmer. Kitty Gow had also found protection in it, since the breaking-up of Sir Thomas Hartley's establishment had deprived her of a more comfortable home. Her aunt's husband, and her two sons, had gone to join the insurgent standard, whether willingly or not cannot positively be stated. Even disinclination could not have served to keep them inactive, as detachments had been sent to rout out the male inhabitants of every cabin, and demur to their summons must have earned death at their hands. Illness prevented the wife from following her husband, and her daughters remained to attend her; otherwise, poor Kitty Gow might again have wanted an asylum, and the poor Knitter a ready place of refuge.

Under present circumstances, however, old Nanny was favourably received. Such indeed must have proved the case amongst any of her acquaintances. Nay, amongst total strangers; for even under a roof quite new to her, Nanny never yet had failed to establish herself in the snuggest corner, and to resume the proprietorship of it whenever she again came within its attractive influence.

Nanny displayed her person and her head, sorely bruised and battered, and cried—"Oh! asy, asy, asy, my honey pet!" as Kitty Delouchery, and the commiserating girls of the house, examined various protuberances that felt very soft to the touch. Half the day was spent in the recital of her moving and wondrous adventure, and in moaning and wailing in all the pathos of pain. At length the poor Knitter, really ill, was compelled "to take to the bed," with a prospect of not rising thence for many days.

This was an affliction to her almost as sore as her durance in the chest, or as the bruises it had conferred. For, upon entering the cabin, she looked forward to setting on foot almost immediately her plans for the relief of the heiress of Hartley Court. Her fretting at the disappointment, and her extreme anxiety again to have the use of her alert limbs, only retarded her uprise.

Although Nanny's confinement of some days postponed her generous and heroic purpose, perhaps, by affording time for sedate reflection, it contributed to, rather than detracted from, the chances of ultimate success. Her first impulse had been to seek out Sir William Judkin, and inform him where to find his wife. But amid the after-thoughts of her lonely pillow, Nanny reflected that, supposing Sir William delivered from prison, (a matter she strongly doubted,) he was, according to the admissions of Rattling Bill, overheard in her chest, either too closely watched to allow of his

acting beneficially, or—"The Lord have marcy on his sowl in glory, above, amin!"—dead and buried by this time in the church-yard of Dunbrody. To confer with him, therefore, were in the latter case impossible: in the former, a useless waste of time, already too much wasted. Nay, did he yet live, and live even with full liberty to take his own measures, he would go too hotly and incautiously to work. He would too openly approach the place of his wife's concealment, and afford, by his very first movement, a signal to Talbot to convey her to some other place, whither neither he nor Nanny could trace her. The result of all these cogitations, therefore, was, that she, Nanny, and no other person,—except, indeed, that "purty Kitty Gow," might be called in as an assistant,—was capable of undertaking the liberation of Eliza. And so, having at length recoverd the use of her persevering, if not nimble feet, the Knitter, secretly abetted by the young counsellor just mentioned, engaged in the necessary measures for her exploit.

But, before Nanny's appearance on the scene of action, it is proper that Eliza should again be visited in her solitude.

For a few days she had borne up, with what resignation she could, against the agitating uncertainities of her state: Mrs. Nelly, still very obsequious, commiserating, and Eliza feared, sycophantic: her colleague Robert, always bowing whenever his fair charge appeared in view. Upon the evening of the fifth day, after twilight, and while pronouncing her usual parting benediction of—"The blessin' o' God be wid you an' about you, my lady!" Mrs. Nelly handed our heroine a thick letter, and withdrew.

Eliza gazed on the superscription. Again the hand was, or seemed beyond doubt to be, her father's. She hastily broke the seal, and, with what feelings may easily be imagined, read the following extraordinary communication:—

"My Beloved Child—

"In a very few days more I shall be free to embrace you, and resume my place in society. My indefatigable friend has succeeded in making a favourable impression of my case upon Government. We but await the official proceedings, which are to effect an unqualified reversal of the sentence of the Court-martial. So, my own Eliza, keep up your spirits, and your strength of mind, and be prepared to give me a good welcome. You will need both on another account. Though your father is to be restored to you, Eliza, you have much to suffer—yet much to rejoice at, too; much for which to thank and glorify God. Attend. When, upon the night of our

journey to your house of refuge, you asked me questions concerning a certain individal, I did not decline answering them merely because the rude guide might overhear us.—No, Eliza, I was too dreadfully agitated at the mentioning of *that man's* name, to trust myself in reply. The abruptness of my answer might have destroyed you; or, at best, so much shocked you, as to interrupt our journey, and so provoke the most disastrous consequences. I saw the necessity of allowing myself to cool before we held further communication on the subject, and of placing you in a situation, where the effects of what I had to tell would be attended with less peril to us all.

"Now, my dearest child, I will answer your questions. You demanded intelligence concerning your Husband. *You have no Husband!* Start not, my darling, nor mistake my meaning. The man—the Fiend you call so, yet lives. But you wrongly call him so—he is not your husband! Hearken to an explanation, which can be but given in the form of a statement that, while it fully explains your predicament, will also supply a clue to my late and present situation.

"Before he saw you, or at least addressed you, he had won the heart of a beautiful young creature, who loved him to excess—to a wild, a passionate excess, unfeminine, if not degrading. She was the daughter of a woman of high birth, but of passions and dispositions even exceeding her own in strength, in obstinacy, and indeed in quality. This wretched mother of a wretched daughter, was at once as haughty and impetuous in spirit, as she was grovelling in inclination. Partly to escape a match she detested—partly to indulge an unworthy preference—she eloped from her father's house with a man of obscure birth, mean, and even vicious habits, one who was recommended to her eye alone, by a tolerable exterior, and a bold address. After the first burst of her rash and ignoble passion, she soon discovered to what a wretch she had attached herself. Cut off, by her own act, from a return to her family and to society, she abandoned her despicable husband, and retired from his view into a remote solitude, where was born the victim of Sir William Judkin's villany.

"The unhappy woman now had an object in existence. It became her wish and endeavour to educate her daughter for a place in that society which was shut against herself. She partly succeeded. But her lonely communings with her child did not assist other and better impressions, nor help to subdue the dangerous strength of passion, the morbidness of mind, the haughty and revengeful spirit she had transmitted to her.

"The tempter appeared, and mother, as well as daughter, eagerly countenanced his attentions. The one, because she saw in him a man who, by espousing her child, could place her in rank and station; the other, because she extravagantly loved him. His visits to their solitude were frequent. Let me have done with this point at once. Under a promise of marriage, he destroyed his victim."

"After some time, the deluded girl heard that he had paid his addresses to you. Giving way to the stern vehemence of her nature, now heightened by almost every goading passion, she quitted her home, and hastened to confront him. They met in Waterford, where he was transacting some business. Accusations and reproaches passed between them. She taxed him with his infidelity; reminded him of his oaths to her; intimated that she must soon become a mother; and plainly and proudly told him that at the very altar she would step between him and you.

"The wretch laughed at her fury; swore that he had never entertained the most remote idea of abandoning her; that the rumour of his attentions to you was false; that his love for her was as strong as ever. To prove his assertions, he proposed to make her his wife without loss of time.

"Again she trusted him. The circumstance of his procuring a disgraced clergyman to celebrate the marriage ceremony did not arouse her suspicions, although the man was intoxicated while he performed his office, and was incapable of comprehending the rank or even the names of the parties.

"Restored to her destroyer's endearments, she once more gave way to undoubting bliss. He proposed a pleasurable excursion on the water about Dunbrody, near to his residence, in which she was to assume her place as wife and mistress. Attended by one servant, they embarked in a small boat upon the river.—Now, Eliza, my dear and precious treasure, so miraculously saved—summon all your strength of mind to note the sequel.—They were in the midst of the expanse of water. Night and silence reigned over them. Her arm was round his neck; she whispered into his ear her enjoyment of the sweet solemnity of the scene, as his bride, and while the heart was happy. Even in the dim light, she saw his brow suddenly darken. He snatched a pistol from his breast, and struck her with it on the forehead. She fell, uttering one loud scream. Blow followed blow, now dealt by the servant as well as by the master, and she retained, for a moment, just as much consciousness as informed her that both were engaged in perpetrating a preconcerted murder. She had sealed her doom, when

she told him that, while she lived she would stand between him and you.

"They must have deemed her dead, under repeated blows, although Providence willed that they should err in their conclusions. Struggling in the water into which they had cast her, the poor creature partially regained her senses. Perception again failed: at its next return, she vaguely apprehended that she was in another boat, rowed by two vulgar men.

"By their conversation, it appeared that, walking by the banks of the river, they had heard her scream, and possessing themselves of a boat, which lay pulled up from the influence of the tide, had rowed out and saved her. But their farther discourse told that they thought her dead. By word, by groan, or cry, she did not undeceive them. The first forming of a dreadful resolution, suggested even with the faintest return of consciousness, kept her silent.

"The men conveyed her to a miserable cabin, tenanted by an old woman and her daughter, and one of them undertook to dress her wounds, and skilfully performed the task. This individual manifested towards her an anxiety, and even a gentleness, very different from his boisterous manner to others, for which he roughly swore he could not account. He questioned her often as to the names of the perpetrators of the outrage upon her. But though allowing them to see she was now sensible, the sufferer kept her secret. Other pangs besides those caused by the murderous hand of her inhuman husband, racked her frame;—nay, he had directly caused even these. The men withdrew. Attended by the old woman and her daughter, she was prematurely delivered of a dead infant. She asked to look upon it: a glance told her, that its father's blows had killed it. There, in that hovel, stretched upon her damp straw, groaning beneath her festering wounds, and feebly pressing her murdered baby to her heart, the purpose before thought of settled into deep resolution. With the wild passion of a broken and despairing heart she swore, should she live, to live but for revenge. For a revenge she regarded as rightful.

"But it seemed that she could not live. The boisterous man inquired if she had no relations to whom it would be well to convey intelligence of her state. Still she was silent. Until, at a moment when she thought her death inevitable, she called him to her side, and mentioned her mother's name. He started,—he seemed as much agitated as a man of his nature and habits could be. An explanation ensued. In the person of her vulgar and swaggering deliverer, the unhappy girl discovered a father.

"He left her to seek the abode of the wife who for nineteen years he had not seen: the victim's mother flew to her miserable couch. The shock almost instantly killed that haughty and fallen lady. The only hope of a whole life lay wrecked before her; and her last sob was given upon the feeble body of her child—But not before she had caused the sufferer to clasp her hands across the little corpse that lay between them, and renew the oath previously sworn.

"The widowed and childless orphan saw in this additional misery of her mother's death, fresh cause to repeat, and to strengthen, her former dread resolution. Even her profligate father, who witnessed the scene, knelt, unasked, and voluntarily devoted himself to act as the agent of her vengeance.

"His daughter, though at another time she would have shunned all connexion with him, now felt no shame of the parent who appeared fitted as well as anxious to promote her purpose. And he obviously seemed as much awed into interest by the lofty character of his newly-discovered daughter, as he was induced to aid her at the prompting of any natural affection. In obedience to her first wishes, he and his companion secretly conveyed, to a certain place of burial, the remains of her mother and of her infant. Returning to her straw couch, he was fully admitted into her confidence. He swore to place her destroyer at her mercy, under circumstances that would permit her to deal with him as her wrecked heart longed, and had more than once vowed to do. Even while she yet lay prostrate, he set off to contrive the secret capture of Sir William Judkin, before he should become wedded—nominally—to you, Eliza.—For the prevention of that event was as anxiously desired by your wretched rival, as was the accomplishment of her actual revenge upon her—husband. Indeed she had instructed her father to prevent it by any measures he could devise, provided that, in the mean time, Judkin escaped his grasp.

"You have seen, Eliza, the man so often mentioned. You saw him in the character of a juggler upon the review-field, almost the first day of his appearance abroad, in prosecution of his plans. You know, too, of one of his attempts to secure the person of his daughter's betrayer. I allude to the night when Priest Rourke rescued Sir William Judkin. Governed by his double instructions, he intrigued to prevent the marriage between that villain and you, at the same time that he sought to get him into his power, lest—as indeed it proved to be the case—his efforts in the latter instance should fail. And now I approach a part of my statement

which relates to my own recent and present situation, as nearly as it does to yours.

"Although this agent, Nale, felt, I am sure, really zealous for his daughter's sake, his character, and the habits of his whole life, rendered it impossible that he could act even in her regard without at the same time attending to his personal interests. In this view, instead of openly coming to me, and warning me of my beloved child's danger, he sought out your old admirer, Harry Talbot, of whose former relation towards you he soon made himself aware, and from whose chafing state of mind he cunningly calculated his own mean advantages. By slow degrees, only, and indifference to repeated bribes, did he communicate to Talbot any important information. Although, at the very outset, he declared himself the possessor of a secret which would prove Judkin a villain, at the mercy of the laws of his country, and effectually put an end to the acquaintance between you and him. Thus, of course, arousing in the breast of the rejected lover an eager interest which he well knew how to turn to account.

"The tangible communication he at last made was contained in the charge preferred to your own ear against Judkin by Talbot. But at the moment when Nale hinted this terrific fact, he had warned Talbot not for some time to divulge or proceed upon it. The man awaited his daughter's restoration to health, or at least, a renewed consultation with her, before he would authorize a story, of which her personal appearance was the most necessary proof. But, hurried away by his mingled feelings of love for you, and, I believe, sincere alarm on your account, your old friend forgot this warning. Thus Nale, still unable to advise with his daughter, did not hesitate to deny, before Magistrate Whaley, that he had ever been authority for the startling accusation.

"Meantime, a day was named for your marriage. Nale, consistently with his atrocious character, had recourse to the most diabolical scheme for preventing its occurrence. Again, you will find him urged on as much by a base selfishness, as by zeal in his true cause, for exertion. He planned, that if he could make out against Judkin or me a plausible charge of disloyalty, the arrest of either would at once postpone your union, and entitle him, as informer, to a high reward. In other instances, he has played double with the wretched insurgents. From this speculation, considering the importance that must attach to his services on account of our rank, he hoped to draw superior advantages.

"It is to be presumed, that, with the chances of success equal

to his view, he might have preferred Judkin as the victim of his peculiar rascality. Though I question even that, seeing how determined his unhappy daughter was to get her destroyer into her own hands, that she might herself inflict vengeance upon him. At all events, Nale could not fix on so many appearances in Judkin's conduct and actions capable of being turned into evidence of disaffection, as he detected in mine. Accordingly, although Judkin, too, was arrested along with me, in order to secure a separation between him and you, and, indeed, to dispose him for the fate to which his desperate wife had doomed him, against me became directed the immediate shafts of false evidence.

"I come to the last fact that it is at present prudent to communicate. The very night before the day appointed for your marriage, your poor rival, at length able to exert herself in her own behalf, sought out Nale, and learned from him his abominable scheme for carrying her wishes into effect. She learned, in real horror, that the villain had cooly sacrificed me, as well to promote her purpose, as to gratify his own thirst of money. She flew to a person who, without exposing her despicable parent, might, she hoped, interfere to protect me. That person had already known of Nale's plot, and certainly in the most sagacious way, had resolved upon measures to defeat it. The result proves, indeed, how wisely, as well as how anxiously, he exerted himself to save your father, I speak of the friend before mentioned, to whom we owe all.

"I conclude, by warning you that it is not upon Talbot's previous assertion of the villany of Judkin, I now require you to credit the statements of this letter. Not even upon the allegations of Nale do I ask you to credit them. I have seen and conversed with the wretched heroine of my dark story, and from her own lips received all the facts I communicate to you. You have yourself seen and conversed with her, Eliza, though not in reference to this subject. She was the bearer of my first letter to you in Enniscorthy, and afterwards your guide to the spot where you met me. In further explanation of what I write, you shall see her again, perhaps before I can be quite at liberty to anticipate her visit. One word more I will add about her. It is the wish and effort of my friend and myself to save her destroyer from her personal revenge; although we can but save him for the more sedate vengeance of the laws of his country.

"Farewell, my beloved, my cherished, and wonderfully-preserved child! God's peace be with you where you are, until you can be folded to the heart of your father,

"T. H."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE reader has been left to imagine the feelings with which this letter was perused by Eliza, in preference to attempting any description of them. We must still do the same thing, acknowledging our inability to follow the workings of her heart at the first shock of this demonstration of the fiendish perfidy of Sir William Judkin. For demonstration Eliza took the letter to be. A doubt of its authenticity never once occurred to her. Every word read like truth, and like the very words of her father. If for an instant any parts of it seemed strange, and strange only, as coming from him, they were those in which, notwithstanding the clear proofs of Talbot's bad and black character, evident in his arrest of his former friend, and in his conduct to herself at the castle of Enniscorthy, her beloved parent seemed to allude with toleration to that person.

Eliza at length finished the perusal of this, to her, appalling document. Still she sat motionless, except for occasional shudderings. Tearless the poor girl also remained; her anguish was too deep for the relief of tears. Suddenly she heard the key turn, with scarce a sound, in the lock of her chamber-door: the handle was very softly moved, and a gentle pull given.

Starting up in the utmost alarm, though she knew not why, Eliza hastened to ascertain if she had fastened the door on the inside. The bolt was indeed shot home. She paused with suspended breath to observe what would next take place.

There came two almost silent knocks, as if little knobs of velvet had tapped. Eliza remained still as possible. The soft challenge was repeated. Then, after another pause, the faintest breath of a whisper trembled through the key-hole.

"It's poor ould Nanny, Lady Eleezabeth Judkin, barrowknight, my honey pet."

"Nanny!" whispered Eliza, in reply, utterly amazed: "Nanny! impossible!"

She touched the bolt with her finger, but hesitated.

"Don't be a bit afeard, Lady Eleezabeth, my honey pet. It's poor ould Nanny, as sure as I'm a lump of a sinner this blessed night."

It was the Knitter's peculiar dialect, indeed, and an accompanying gurgle, quite distinct from the intonation of any other of the human species, removed all Eliza's doubts, and convinced her

that her old counsellor indeed sought an audience. Imitating Nanny's stealthy proceedings, she gently undid the bolt; and it seemed that, without the slightest creak, the door self-unfolded. Nanny had continued to hold the lock handle in the opening twist, to which her second evolution brought it: then, an inhabitant of the regions of spirits never moved more noiselessly than did the very palpable old dame. Giving a peculiar look of caution, she very slowly coaxed the door to its closing position, and as slowly, and quite as imperceptibly to the ear, permitted the self-acting handle to revolve until it had again stolen into its place the bolt it commanded.

"Nanny!" Eliza continued to repeat, "I can scarce believe my eyes!" The sight of the old woman was some little comfort to her heart, inasmuch as from her habits of close, and all but omnipresent observation, she instantly reckoned on receiving some welcome or necessary tidings concerning the world without.

"Hooshth, hooshth, Lady Eleezabeth, my honey!" cautioned Nanny, as she completed her precautions of bolting, and even locking the door, each operation being just as noiseless as any that had preceded it.

"Have you been sent to me?—and by whom?"

Nanny repeated her "hooshth," for she had not yet quite done with bolt and key.

"Or if not, how, in Heaven's name, have you found your way hither?"

"Hooshth, Lady Eleezabeth, my duck-o'-dimons! Discoorse asy, or we're spiled for ever. Them ears o' Nelly abroad, though they're on the head o' the gossip o' me, that stood for the little daughther I have doin' for herself in Ross town, they'd hear the dhroppin' o' the weeniest minikin pin that ever stuck in a stomacher. So we'll stale as asy as ever we can, an' we'll plank ourselves down in the corner beyant the bed, where the candle doesn't shine. An' where the talk'll be kep in, an' we'll convarse about what brought ould Nanny to be so bould afore a lady o' the land."

With the velvet pace of a cat, when stealing over the carpet in an apartment where she knows she has no right to be, Nanny led the way to the secret corner, and while Eliza occupied a chair opposite to her, there "planked herself on her hunkers," and resumed. "An' it's who sent me to you, you're axin', Lady Eleezabeth, my honey? Sure, barrin' Divine Providence, this blessed an' holy night, nó one sent ould Nanny but herself. An' many a weary turnin' an' twinin' she had afore she could bring her poor ould four bones forrent you, my honey pet."

Even under the urgent circumstances of the present case, when she knew and felt in her heart that every moment uselessly spent exposed her to detection, Nanny yet commenced her series of details with that very one she might have omitted, so much was she accustomed to a leisurely digressive ramble, as well in her discourse, as in her personal peregrinations. It happens, however, that on this occasion, her idle gossip to her young patroness supplies the last link of her proceedings since we last saw her, with which, previous to the dispatch of her real business, it may be necessary to acquaint the reader.

The day before her present appearance, she had called, just by chance, as it were, to visit, in Captain Talbot's new house the same housekeeper, Mrs. Nelly, with whom she had formerly been intimate in that gentleman's other house, about two miles from Hartley Court, and who was, indeed, godmother to "the little daughther of her." The gossips relished each other's society, and, with slight pressing, though much would have been offered if necessary, Nanny agreed to "stop the night." Towards evening, in consequence of some cautious hints, Mrs. Nelly took her visitor to inspect the fine new house; and Nanny saw the inside of every room under its roof, except two, which, according to her cicerone, were occupied by "an ould friend o' the masther's hiddin in 'em from hurt an' harum."

This hint was quite enough for the shrewd Knitter. The friends returned down stairs to their tea, and Nanny, with great satisfaction, saw her hostess infuse a considerable quantity of strong whiskey into each cup, as a sovereign remedy (and Nanny agreed that it was) against what Mrs. Nelly called the "wather-flash in the stomach." But for this night she took no advantage of her discovery of the housekeeper's habit of thus prescribing for her imaginary complaint.

Next morning, "afther her good break'ast, bless the providhers!" the old woman set out to complete her arrangements with Kitty Gow, promising to return "by the night-fall to her little bit o' supper, an' a snug bed for hersef." She kept her promise. Soon after Mrs. Nelly's departure from Eliza, she joined the housekeeper in her room, and found her again much troubled with "wather-flash," and disposed to attack it with her usual specific. Nanny's praise of the remedy was now downright eloquent, and she kindly admonished Mrs. Nelly to repeat it more than once. Nay, when the most violent "wather-flash" must needs have been got under, (else were there no virtue in the medicine,) the patient consented, after a little earnest advice from her friend, to put "jist another

three or four spoonfuls in her tay, to hendher it from comin' on in the night-time." So that, long before her usual hour, partly under the influence of the powerful soporific, partly under that of Nanny's no less lulling accents—a monotonous rumble of voice, well calculated, like the wind through a key-hole at night, to set any one asleep—Mrs. Nelly began, as her crony termed it, "to pay compliments." That is, with gradually-closeing lids, to drop her head on her breast, raise it, half conscious of the weakness, and then as suddenly let it drop again; her mouth wearing all the while a curious kind of vague smile, that seemed to betoken her last fading sense of a polite necessity to respond to the unheard gabble of her entertaining guest.

By degrees Nanny lowered her voice, lest an abrupt change from talking to silence might have an unwished-for effect; and at length, rejoiced to see that the housekeeper slept profoundly. A few minutes afterwards she was at Eliza's chamber-door, but not for many minutes after that had she finished to her liking the first account of herself, which is here considerably abridged, in deference to the impatience of the reader.

Her next roundabout story consisted of a minute account of the secret arrangements of Kitty Gow and herself to accomplish the escape of Eliza from her state of durance; concluding with the intelligence that Kitty waited that moment, with a horse and pillion, in a secret place near to the house, to become the guide of our heroine to the town of Ross, where Nanny's daughter would afford to both a shelter and a welcome.

Eliza now naturally inquired into the reason for Nanny's great anxiety to remove her from her present situation. She had heard the old woman confirm her own first suspicions, that she was under Talbot's roof, and thence inferred, doubtless sufficient cause in her own mind, for abandoning it as soon as possible. But she foresaw, that merely this fact could not endue her friend with the unusual zeal she now manifested.

The history followed, at full length, of the Knitter's imprisonment in the chest; involving her report of the direful discourse held between Rattling Bill and Sam Stick-leg during her itinerant captivity. Eliza listened in great agitation to Nanny's version of the declarations of Nale with respect to herself and Sir William, by which it strongly appeared that the young Baronet was to be murdered, as she had been ensnared and deprived of her liberty, in order to forward the views of Talbot upon herself. "He's only waitin', my honey pet," said Nanny, half reporting, half commenting, "until

the darlin' of a Sir William 'ill be berred in Dunbrody, abroad there, an' then he'll make you marry him in spite o' the world." At this intelligence, so much to be relied on, Eliza instantly began to recur to all her former conclusions of treachery, and to doubt—wondering how she could for a moment have omitted to do so—the last epistle, professing to come from her father.

Nanny could not be raving or romancing. The zeal and the disinterested heroism with which she had dared so many dangers, to avert from her patroness the evil she believed hung over her, proved that she was not: proved that her motive to action must have been derived from the unquestionable evidence of her very correct ears. If so, did it not appear plain that the whole story of Sir William's perfidy, as well as the letter which conveyed it, was invented by Talbot to further his hopes of Eliza's favour? To dislodge his rival from her esteem, in order that a vacant place might be left for his future recommendation of himself? Nay, such recommendation had already lurked in the artful pages of that very letter. Seemingly under her father's hand, the wily enemy had sought to place some of his former actions favourably before her. And Eliza brought to mind, that even while no doubt of the beguiling document occurred, she had instinctively wondered, considering it penned by her father, at that obvious discrepancy. From all this new conviction, her heart turned not only with renewed interest, but with trembling alarm for his safety, to the slandered and persecuted Sir William. And in the belief that she, as well as his foes, had wronged him, tears of self-reproach filled her eyes, followed by tears of joy that she again could think him worthy of her confidence.

But she was yet to receive more decisive proof of the truth of her reasonings. While reporting the memorable dialogue held at each side of the chest, Nanny had, as yet, forgotten or suppressed many important passages. For example, to say nothing of Nale's allusions to his being directed and "driven," by some unknown woman, in his designs upon Sir William Judkin, she never once repeated the words of that scoundrel and his comrade, in reference to Sir Thomas Hartley's death. And while the former omission might have been merely accidental, the latter, perhaps chiefly arose out of delicacy to Eliza's "throuble, on the head o' the hangin' of the darlin' father of her." So Nanny afterwards professed; it never having entered into her thoughts to conceive that Eliza had so long remained ignorant of what "all the world were risin' up their hands and eyes, wondherin at."

In answer, however, to Eliza's inquiries concerning the last account our Knitter could give of Sir William Judkin, the overwhelming intelligence at length reached our heroine.

"Of all the nights o' the year, Lady Eleezabeth, my pet, it was last Monday night, or 'twould be the fitther to call it last Tuesday mornin'. We wor hard at work, mysef an' Misthress Flannigan, an' Misther Flannigan, the butler, hidin' the plate an' all the things at Hartley Coort from the covetous yeomen, that we spected 'ud call back to take a loock at it, afther we knew for sart'n that the darlin' Sir Thomas,—God be good to his sowl in glory! amin,—was murthered from us———"

Eliza, with a quick catching of her breath, seized the woman's arm.

"Nanny! what do you say?"

"Not all out so early in the night, Lady Eleezabeth, my honey. My ould tongue said it too pat—no, not till about two hours, or two hours an' a half afther, as I hard from the mouths o' many that knows it well—yeomen, that stood by at the gallow's foot, as well as others—"

"Oh, Nanny, Nanny! be brief! What gallow's foot? Whom did they stand by to see executed?"

"Ochone! ochone! an' who, an' who! an' who ud be worth talkin' of Lady Eleezabeth, my honey pet? Who, when so many are sthrung up like dogs an' cats every hour o' the blessed day an' night! Who, bud him that the world wide, man, woman, an' child, are cryin' afther, from that day to this? Last Monday night, or what's the fitther to call it, last Tuesday mornin'! Who, who, my poor gra of a pet, but the honey darlin' father o' you, Lady Eleezabeth, you poor crature!"

Ere Nanny had quite ended, her auditor, without a single cry or groan, lay senseless at her feet.

It was a considerable time before the appalled gossip could succeed in restoring animation. As she seldom, however, allowed her fellings to overcome her judgment, Nanny actively engaged in all the usual methods adopted on such occasions, and at length saw her young patroness able to sit up and gaze around her. Then the old dame, conscious of the enormous impropriety she had committed in not ascertaining the extent of Eliza's information with regard to her father's death, previous to her own abrupt allusion, hastened, to make a lowly apology.

"I ax God's pardon, an' your pardon, Lady Eleezabeth, my [illegible] o' the world." And pushing herself from her sitting position

on her heels, to her knees, she fell on the palms of her hands, and three times kissed the floor at Eliza's feet.

"Say once again distinctly, what you said just now—let me be sure I understand you," commanded Eliza, in a hollow voice.

"It was about—" whispered Nanny.

"My father!"

"Och, ay! But I'm a'most afeared to say it again, you look so frightened, my honey pet."

"Go on!" and Eliza insisted on obtaining all the information Nanny could convey. That her father had indeed been executed upon the night of her rapid journey from Enniscorthy to her present place of imprisonment—that Captain Talbot had been foremost in precipitating his fate—that, in the same spirit in which he had refused our heroine admission to the castle of Enniscorthy, he had also openly repulsed the witnesses who came to tender their evidence in favour of his old friend.—Finally, that, in the dead hour of night, he had stood at the gallow's foot until the last breath escaped his victim. All this Eliza learned as matter-of-fact, publicly known for many days past, and not denied by Talbot himself.

Benumbing to her mental faculties as was Eliza's tearless despair at this information, still she received from it the last incontrovertible proof, that since the moment of the strange woman's appearance before her in the inn at Enniscorthy, down to the present hour, deception and treachery had been practised upon her. It now admitted of no debate, that the two letters, bearing her poor father's signature, were base forgeries, and that an impostor had personated him during her flight to Talbot's house. And that the author of this tissue of villany and deceit—the monster, Talbot, the murderer of her father, perhaps of her husband, whom in his insidious epistle he had so slandered!—detained her under his roof, only awaiting his time to present himself before her.

While these thoughts became fixed in her stunned mind, Nanny watched her with much alarm. Still as a statue, her face pale and rigid as death, she kept her dry burning eyes vacantly bent on the old woman. The Knitter, by all forms of condolence with which she was acquainted, tried to break through this most wretched of all the manifestations of grief, interlarding her appeals with continued allusions to the necessity for instant flight from the house in which they then were, and to the perfect state of readiness in which they would find Kitty Gow, close at hand.

"Come!" at last exclaimed Eliza, starting up with a suddenness

that made Nanny bound aside, frog-like. With feverish haste the poor girl set about arraying herself for a journey.

Nanny, still more alarmed at the uncalculating noise occasioned by Eliza's vehement motions and proceedings, humbly remonstrated upon the necessity of "doin' every thing quite an' asy." Also adding, that before they could venture to leave the house together, it beheved her "to stale down stairs, widout makin' mooch noise wid her feet," and ascertain if all was favourable for their perilous attempt.

"Go, then!" said Eliza, in a tone of voice so little modulated to the necessities of the case, that Nanny saw it would be better not to provoke her into farther conversation. Without another word, therefore, the old woman got through all her silent process of unlocking, unbolting, and unlatching the door. As Eliza, now attired for her expected flight, fixedly and almost sternly watched Nanny's exit, her confused mind began to regard the creeping creature but as an accomplice in the general plot so direfully perfected for her ruin.

With her throat parched and choking, but her impulse to scream aloud kept down; with her person erect, and braced in desperation, while her clasped hands met beneath her bosom; with her yet unmoistened eye fixed upon the half-open door—thus stood Eliza at Nanny's return from reconnoitering the state of the garrison. The deep, frozen expression of her otherwise inexpressible woe—the stony composure of her features and figure, in the silence and dim light of the spacious chamber—caused Nanny to start back, as soon as her grotesque person slid over the threshold. But, recovering herself, she gave a sign that circumstances seemed to favour their intended escape. In a few minutes, partly owing to Mrs. Nelly's "cure for the wather-flash," partly to her keys, which Nanny had "jest borried" from the nail on which they hung, Eliza occupied a pillion behind Kitty Gow, who, with her right knee over the pummel of a man's saddle, and her left foot in a man's stirrup, a whip in her hand, and a little bonnet tied down close to her ears, sat prepared to conduct Eliza from her abhorred prison. Thus humbly mounted, and with a girl as young as herself, and, at least, in happier days, not unlike herself in character, to act as her protector, did the heiress of Hartley Court prepare to fly the dangers that threatened her.

"It's to Ross town you're for goin' Lady Eleczabeth, my darlin' pet," said Nanny, as she stood a moment at Kitty Gow's stirrup—"only six or seven miles, or thereaway, from us. There the little daughther o' me will do her best, as in duty bound, her an' hers, for

ever, bless all good bennyfactors, to keep you out o' harum's way—The road afore you is clane an' clear of them foolish, wicked Croppies that's behavin' themselves so bad elsewhere.—An' Kitty Gow, my honey, jest tell Nance that, by the same token an ould woman was wid her last Christmas-day—she'll know what ould woman you mane—an' gave her, unknownst to a livin' sowl bud their own two sefs, four hundhred in oaten male for the child's Christmas-box. An' I'll be wid ye mysef, Lady Eleczabeth, my honey jewel, to-morrow early, plase God I live so long, an' gets safe an' sound out o' the one house wid Misthress Nelly. Looke, Kitty, my pet," sinking her voice, so that Kitty only might hear her, "you have your own throubles to make you sorrowful, to keep the smiles from your two purty cheeks, an' to make the pleasant voice o' you be more dismal nor it used to be—but, Kitty, my honey, Lady Eleezabeth's throubles is greater than yours by far, an' if you'd thry to rise her heart wid some merry stories on the road, an' maybe a merry laugh, an' the light heart, an' the quick thought an' word, at whatever may come across ye—God purtect the both! I don't mane that there's any danger—why, then, Kitty, my gra, you'd only be doin' what 'ud be the kind thing, an' the dutiful thing, in regard to one o' the ladies o' the land that the likes of us has no right to compare oursefs to.—Or to laugh when they laugh, or to cry when they cry, or to think of our throubles when they're in their own throubles—To say nothin' o' what you're beholdin' for to her an' hers, or nothin' of the boy that you wish well, that ate his bread, an' dhrank his sup undher their roof, an' that you know I always had a good notion of, for your sake."

In the same low tone in which she was thus admonished, Kitty assured her counsellor that her own love and pity towards our heroine did not require to be excited into the disposition necessary for the sacrifice of her personal sorrows upon this occasion. And that, in every respect, she would exert her spirits to—as Nanny expressed it—"rise Lady Eleezabeth's heart."

Adieus were interchanged. Kitty whipped her indifferent steed; and almost at the first step of their journey, found herself appealed to for the observance of her promise to the Knitter. Hitherto, Eliza had kept the rigid stillness of manner, and the deep silence, in which she quitted Talbot's house. The motion of the horse acted as a keen remembrancer to her heart. She turned her head, and glanced at the hated house from which she was about to fly. Her desolate situation appeared to her in a new, and afflicting light. The thought of her father's death at length put in play the sources

of natural grief. She again turned her head, and looked upon her humble, her feeble, and yet her only protector. And at last came the bursting shower, as, passing her arm tightly round Kitty Gow, she allowed her head to droop on her guide's shoulders, sobbing out, "Poor girl, poor girl!" For by quick apprehension, she brought to mind Kitty's late misfortunes, not unlike her own; and sympathy for the humble maiden's similar state of unbefriended misery, mingled with her individual suffering.

Nanny had warranted that their road should prove free of the dangerous commotions which elsewhere must be encountered. But the result shows that however skilled she might be in other matters, she knew little of military movements. Though, perhaps, she is entitled to an apology on this occasion, inasmuch as since the first outbreak of the insurrection until she set off to reconnoitre Talbot's house, she had been confined to her bed, and so separated from almost all communication with any of her fellow-creatures who could faithfully report public proceedings.

But in fact, upon this night nearly the whole of the county of Wexford was in the hands of the insurgents. Already they contemplated a serious extension of their victories, by attacking the town of New Ross, the readiest passage into the county of Kilkenny, where they expected to be joined by new reinforcements. The defence of Ross, therefore, became an object of considerable importance, and all the military forces that could be collected were sent thither in expectation of the threatened advance of the victors of Oulard Hill, of Enniscorthy, of Wexford, and of other places. So that Nanny could scarce have chosen a more insecure destination for her protegée.

Again, it is to be noticed, that if Eliza's mind had been disposed to receive impressions congenial to its former tastes, she would have received deep pleasure from the beautiful night-scenes surrounding her during a part of her journey. At different parts of her route she might have caught glimpses of an expansive river, overhung with great masses of foliage, some blank and colourless, but boldly relieved against the clear sky, others chequered by the young moon, which, since her flight from Enniscorthy, had been growing in the Heavens. As she approached the town, extension and variety of this class of scenery might have continued to raise her admiration. Nature, not immersed in impenetrable sleep beneath a rayless night, but half hidden, half revealed, was rather enjoying a gentle slumber; while the soft moonlight was reflected in the broad, smooth river. Various heights, clothed in their graceful woods, sloped down to

bound its waters, or pausing at a distance, allowed the smooth meadow to stretch to its margin.

But Eliza had little perception for outward objects or appearances. When, as was often the case, the burning cabin or mansion sent its sudden red glare against the sky, turning the moon's silver radiance into a sickly pale green, and tinging the summer hue of the woods with the soiled, rusted tints of latest autumn, Eliza's eye became momentarily interested. When the wild and distant shouts that rang through some remote and unknown solitude, appealed still more directly to her terrors, her memory, and her mental associations.

Kitty Gow, who quickly saw how much in error Nanny had been as to the safety of their route, exerted herself to curb the new agitation thus often created in Eliza, and which she felt manifested by a sudden start, an increased pressure of the young lady's arm round her waist, or a quick catching of breath, as if a scream was sought to be kept in. She augured good fortune to their journey. She promised happily for the future, and for Sir William Judkin. She alluded resignedly to her own late sorrows, and gaily to the successes of Tim Reily, which had been spirited to her ears, and which promised to make him a Croppy Captain, at least. And yet Kitty's heart was not quite so forgetful of her poor brother's death, of her mother's madness, and of her father's ruin and desperation. Nor, indeed, so much at ease concerning the safety of Eliza and herself upon their present journey. In case of the occurrence of any thing dangerous, she depended, however, to no very modest extent, upon her own presence of mind, her adroitness, her "gift o' the tongue," and, be it added, her comeliness. But, notwithstanding her arrangements against ill-chance, the young fugitives approached, without accident or question, very close to their destination.

They were now within less than a quarter of a mile of the town of Ross. On the one hand a wooded hill, drooping its foliage over the road, darkened their way: on the other a rich flat, thickly interspersed with trees, and beautified with streams of moonshine and mysterious depths of shadow, extended to the river, which also caught snatches of light upon its waters. There was no breeze; not a leaf trembled. The air was soft and genial: but that the nightingale's song is never heard in the groves of Ireland, here was just the scene and hour for her melody. Instead, the little black-cap was chanting on a willow by the water's edge his comparatively imperfect, yet not disagreeable ditty; and the land-rail was creaking through the silence of the dewy meadow.

Eliza had sunk into a fit of wordless and all-engrossing sorrow, notwithstanding Kitty Gow's best efforts to cheer her. Suddenly, in the midst of this tranquil scene, a peremptory voice gave the challenge,—"Who goes there?"

The words sounded near to them, under the shadow of the overhanging trees, Eliza clung closer to her guide. Kitty inwardly saying, "Now for it, if he's not too ould to be bothered wid a purty face, an' a glib tongue," reigned up her horse, and answered aloud, "It's a friend or two is here."

"Advance friends, and give the countersign," and a mounted dragoon came forward from the darkness and confronted them.

"Take no notice of any *rhamaush* you'll hear me say, my lady," whispered Kitty.

"Aha! a brace o' girls!" said the dragoon, "where are ye goin', my lasses?"

"Why, Sir, we b'lieve this used to be the road to Ross town, an' we're goin' there," answered Kitty Delouchery, so disposing herself as to give some idea of the really pretty face that seconded the merry voice in which she spoke.

"An' what's your business in Ross, my girl?"

"Why, Sir, an' I'll tell you that, too. We're two Protestan' girls, an' we live a' one side of Enniscorthy, about a mile or so;—if you're not too exact wid us, sure we'll give you good measure. These Croppies, they burnt the house while the father was out wid the yeomen, an' we had to run for it. He's in Ross afore us, an' we're comin' to look for him."

"Well, that's all to be seen. You are prisoners until you account for yourselves—Come with me!" and he seized the bridle of Kitty's horse, and led his captives towards the town.

"Who goes there?" challenged another voice, after he had advanced some distance. The videttes soon recognised each other; and the first dragoon delivered the prisoners to his comrade, with instructions to forward them to the guard-house.

"Musha, an' I'm glad of it," reasoned Kitty—"he,"—meaning her first object of attack,—"he was a good-for-nothin' ould throoper, but this crature looks like a body that 'ud take notice of a body."

Eliza, although very unwilling to seem to countenance Kitty's false statements, as well because they were such, as because she knew they must increase the present danger, if discovered, yet continued silent. Nanny had supplied her with a cloak, such as is worn by the lower class of females; Eliza had unconsciously adopted the

disguise. She could not now, consistently with a view to escape suspicion, show a character different from the station it implied. Hence she was compelled to allow Kitty her own way.

The rustic coquette rightly interpreted the temperament of their new detainer.

"I'd bet a day's pay," said the man, as his more grave fellow-soldier withdrew, "that the girls want sweethearts—Eh! my dears?"

"No, Sir, we thank you," answered Kitty. "We'd have more nor enough o' them if we were at home, an' the wars over."

"But you'll want one here, while the war lasts, you know."

"Why, then, that same wouldn't be a bad plan, if a body could make off a boy one 'ud like."

"What do you think of the boy before you? Won't *he* do?"

"Faix! an' that 'ud be buyin' a pig in a bag, Sir. I can't see the sort you are at-all-at-all. But I'll tell you what—I'll show face for face wid you."

"Done, by jingo!" answered the confident dragoon.

"Then here goes!"—she put her hand to untie her little bonnet, and then held it by the edge as she continued—"Mind the word o' command I'll give you:—take your own hairy bonnet in your fist!"—the man laughingly obeyed:—"uncover heads!" At the same moment both accordingly were uncovered, scrutinizing each other. So far as the moonlight permitted a decision, the one showed a pretty smiling face, and the other a fine, manly set of features.

All this time Eliza continued to tremble with apprehensions of the result of Kitty's untrue account of them, and she also felt shocked at the girl's levity. But in vain she pressed her guide's arm; in vain she whispered, "Forbear! forbear! at your peril!"

"Are you done for yet?" questioned Kitty of the dragoon, not noticing these hints and commands.

"Almost," he answered, in the same bantering tone. "How are you off yourself?"

"Purty well, I thank you. Only a little kilt wid the looks o' you, jest as you are wid the looks o' me. We'd make a likely couple."

"I've no time to get married now, my lass; an' there's no parson at hand if I had. I'll tell you more, my handsome pet—I wouldn't, if I *had* the time an' the parson at our elbow."

"Well, no matther. Whisper;" and she pulled his arm towards her, and he leaned his ear to her lips, "The sisther behind me on the pillion is sick, poor sowl! an' I can't stop to talk wid you now. Bud bring us safe into the town, an' if I don't be stalin' out from

her, never a hair on your cap, or more than that, in your whiskers. Bother to you! you spake to me in the right time; I was longin' to be whisperin' wid a soldier."

"You're a darlin'!" answered the captivated dragoon.—"A kiss on the head o' the bargain."

"Wid a heart an' a half.—But mind my sisther!" It was well for Kitty that Eliza's eyes were turned away; and also well for her, and for her new admirer too, that Tim Reilly was not a witness to the sealing of the compact.

"Where'll I see you? continued Kitty.

"Wherever you like."

"Do you know the—let me think o' myself, for you're afther fluttherin' me a bit—D'you know the church in the town?"

"Right well."

"Ay—but that won't do,—the church-yard is nigh-hand, an' I'm afeard o' sperits. D'you know the Bungeon Lane?"

"Never fear but I do."

"Ay, but that same isn't convenient.—D'you know the cross, in the fair-green, in the Irish-town?"

"As well as I know my horse."

"Well, afther you get us into the town, come up to the cross, in an hour's time, an, you'll see somebody stannin' behind it; an' yourself and that same somebody 'ill be spakin' together, maybe."

Upon these terms, Kitty and the dragoon proceeded together. The walls of the town had been all demolished, either by time, or by the extension of its buildings. But the gates were yet standing, or rather archways that gates once occupied; and from the road along which our travellers approached, by one of these archways, called the Friar's-gate, they were to enter New Ross. As part of the preparations for the expected attack, the inlet had just been half built up, and further secured with wooden barricadoes, evidently of hasty erection.

When very near this entrance, a smooth, obliging voice, not unfamiliar to Eliza's ear, was heard to give a preparatory "hem!" as if to clear the passage for speaking. Then, in the most good-natured accents in which the words could be pronounced, it demanded,

"Pray, who goes there?"

"Friends," answered the dragoon.

"I'm sure you are," rejoined the obliging voice. "I am, upon my credit. But you must say 'General Johnson' to me, before I can let you pass—Unless you like to pass without my lave," he added, very resignedly.

"Curse you! a purty sentinel you are, with all my heart." laughed the horseman. "But, harkee,—here are two girls that must go into the town, for I and they say 'General Johnson' for you."

"General Johnson, an' long life to him!" echoed Kitty—"Till to-morrow mornin', when the boys comes in;" was her mental reservation.

"Very well, very well. I'm happy to oblige you," resumed the civil sentinel.

"Remember the cross, in Irishtown, in an hour," whispered Kitty's new conquest.

"If I'm not there," asseverated Kitty, heartily shaking the hand which had been ungloved for the purpose of duly presenting it,—"I'll give you lave to cut the cross in two with your soord."

Assured and fondly-confiding, the lover helped Kitty and "her sisther" to dismount. Then assisted them down and up a deep trench newly dug between them and the gate. And then, once more reminding Kitty of her engagement, took charge of her old horse—in truth, scarce worth the care—and gallantly rode back to his post.

Eliza had heard the last allusions "to the cross," and now shrank from, as she considered her to be, the criminal Kitty Delouchery.

"You're angry wid me, my lady," said Kitty. "God knows, only for your sake, I would'nt make free wid a soldier of King George's.—But we'd be in the guard-house now, only for it."

"You jested, then?"

"Never fear, my lady. I'm not a bould girl, though I used to be a sprightly one, an' a little in the fashion o' makin' fools o' the men whenever it sarved my turn, or come into my head."

"Well, Kitty, I must overlook your departure from the truth, so much less an error than I supposed you guilty of, out of gratitude to your motive. Though I believe no necessity warrants us to say the thing that is not, or to promise without intending to perform. But, indeed, I wronged you by so quickly supposing you a wicked girl."

"Thry me, my lady, an' if you don't find Kitty Delouchery honest—why, then—" and Kitty's voice trembled—"why then tell her father of her, an' that 'ill be enough. He'd kill her wid his own hand."

"You may pass, my good girls, with the greatest pleasure," said the burly, waddling sentinel, advancing politely, his cap almost

resting on his nose. Both his arms hugged his musket, not affectionately, but instinctive terror, lest (as a monster of its kindred once before did) it might get loose and play him some prank.

"If I mistake not, Sir, I address Mr. Jennings, of Wexford," said Eliza.

"Upon my word and credit, Miss, and so you do;" the turn of respect was unconsciously rendered to Eliza's superior accent.

"Then, Sir, without hesitation, I claim the protection of your roof; if, indeed, you have a home in Ross."

"Why, upon my credit, my dear," altering his favourable impressions of Eliza, as he very oddly misconstrued her request. "Upon my credit, my dear, I don't know how that will be. I'm a quiet, regular man; and though, as it happens, I have a house in Ross, at present I don't think it's a place for young women. My wife—"

"I see you do not know me, Mr. Jennings, though I thought you would. But look again," throwing aside her cloak, "I am the daughter of Sir Thomas Hartley, who has been a friend of yours, when you lived in Wexford, and who had the pleasure of taking you home safe to your family, after your accident at the review."

"Sir Thomas's daughther?"

"Yes, Sir. At present friendless and unprotected, and compelled to fly from her enemies, and crave the charity of a roof to cover her."

"Oh, poor young lady!—oh, God pity you!—oh, yes, I heard of it.—Oh, dear me!—oh, come, Miss Hartley, upon my word and credit, and I'll see you to my house, sure enough. My poor wife and little daughthers will be glad and proud to have you in it. They'll never forget, no more than myself, that day, when Sir Thomas, and now I remember, yourself along with him, Miss, handed me out of his own carriage, at the very dour o' the shop. Come, Miss, come—" he was preparing to bustle forward—"but, upon my word and credit, they won't let me lave this till some one comes to stand in my place. Oh, Miss Hartley," and his voice sank to querulous complaint—"isn't it a miserable case for a quiet man like me, that has no more notion—no, I take my God to witness!—no more notion of doing any one any harm than the babby on its mother's breast, to be forced to be out of his comfortable bed at this time o' night? Marching about, and standing in the could night air, in this way, and houlding a gun, that you know, from what you've seen, is often the death o' people?"

"Indeed, Sir, I think they might substitute younger men."

"An' them guns has a hathred to some people above others,"

said Kitty Delouchery, who had heard of Mr. Jennings's accident, on the review-field.

"Upon my word, I believe you, young woman."

After some further discourse, Mr. Jennings invited Eliza and her servant, as he understood Kitty to be, to wait by his side, upon his post, until he should be relieved, which he expected would very shortly occur. But Eliza was averse to the observation which this might occasion, and also fearful, that by it strangers would become aware of her intention to accompany Mr. Jennings home; a fact she wished to conceal, lest Talbot might profit by it. She demurred, therefore, to Mr. Jennings's offer, and arranged instead, that, until he should be free, she and Kitty would await him at the house of Nanny's daughter, whither Kitty undertook to conduct our heroine; "the ways o' the place" being well known to the young coquette, as may be inferred from her dialogue with the susceptible dragoon.

Until really put to task, the human mind can form no idea of its own powers of endurance. If, but a fortnight since, any one had prophesied to Eliza the accumulation of misery which she now experienced, she would have said that her death, or the deprivation of her senses, must have resulted from it. And, indeed, were she called upon to bear, as she might, the anguish of her father's sudden and shameful death, and the fears of her husband's ruin, it is propable that Eliza might have lain stunned under two such deadly blows. But the eager impulse to avoid a new evil, which her soul instinctively shrank from, supplied by a last appeal to her energies, the capability to struggle against her less recent trials.

Eliza's sense of her desolate and miserable situation was not, however, amid all her present efforts to avoid her enemy, the less poignant or absorbing. As she and Kitty Gow, after much knocking at the door of a very humble house, at last sat down in the little huxter's shop, of which Nanny's daughter was proprietor, to await the charitable offices of Mr. Jennings, her reflections caused her to wring her hands in agony.

Mr. Jennings had fled from Wexford, upon the day of its evacuation by the King's forces, to a brother in Ross, his wife and children accompanying, and often supporting him, along the sultry and dusty road. Unluckily, he did not, upon his safe arrival in the town, lay aside his military jacket, (although he had promptly forsaken his musket.) He was therefore included in the general muster set on foot to oppose the continued successes of the insurgents. It will be believed, that he remonstrated against the evident injustice, as well as inhos-

pitality, of thus binding him to the very stake which he had abandoned his own native place to avoid. Indeed, he would have bluntly refused again to bear arms, if he did not fear that immediate persecution, and very probably death as a suspected rebel, would be the consequence of his demur.

Our young adventurers had not to wait long for his coming. "He was let home for a while to take a bit of supper, and God knows it was only his due, afther walking and walking about for three long-hours, when he ought to be out of his first sleep."

"I'll carry the gun for you, Sir," offered Kitty.

"Eh!" he cried, amazed at her hardihood, "won't you be afraid of it child? It's loaded, I protest."

"Not a bit afeard, Sir. Often I shot a crow when he'd be pickin' the barley on us."

"Why, then, upon my word, here it's for you.—But take care, child—the laste thing in the world would let it off. Oh, Lord! turn the muzzle away, child!" as Kitty, shouldering her piece, playfully slanted it towards him.

Arrived at his own door, Mr. Jennings' timid double-knock, somewhat between the plebeian single blow, and the more elegant tantararara, caused a great fuss within. More than one pair of feet hurried down stairs. "Make haste, Peggy!" cried a shrill female voice; then two persons were heard unlocking and unbolting the door. "Slip the boult, and I'll turn the kay," was the agreement between the anxious little daughters; and, as the father entered, he was so embraced and caressed by them, and by his wife, who now had descended, that for some time his companions escaped notice. He kissed his lady and his children with grateful rapture that he beheld them again, and wiping his forehead of its honourable moisture, bustled into his sitting-room. Here he bethought himself of presenting Eliza, and stating her name and unhappy situation: she was welcomed with a respectful cordiality which soothed her sick heart. Then ensued the disarming of the soldier. His cap was laid aside; his grievous belts and gaiters unbuckled and unbuttoned. At his particular request, in order that none of his family might run the hazard, Kitty placed his musket in a far corner.

A homely supper now appeared, and respectfully pressing Eliza to join him, he engaged it heartily. By the time he had satisfied his appetite, his wife handed him a tumbler of whiskey-punch, of which she had previously, and more than once, tasted a little in the spoon, adding at each trial sugar, or water, or spirits, or lemon, until she quite assured herself that it was exactly of the flavour

which, by long experience, she knew would suit her husband's palate. And while he sipped it, he told of his patrolling through the streets, and of his standing sentinel to keep people from coming into the town, unless they said "General Johnson for him!" Sincerely were his warlike labours commiserated by the listeners.

During this, Eliza was permitted, almost uninterruptedly, to pursue her own thoughts. For though her present protectors could do a kind action, they knew not how, particularly if appealed to by their own concerns at the same time, to do it gracefully or very considerately, Kitty Gow had retired to the kitchen. Suddenly a thundering peal rang at the hall-door. All started in terror. Mr. Jennings was peremptorily summoned forth to attend a full muster of his corps. From accounts just received, the entry of the rebels was instantly expected. A scene ensued of bustle, weeping, and lamenting. The poor man himself seemed overwhelmed. Standing in the middle of the floor, "Oh!" he cried, the tears glazing his eyes, "am't I an unfortunate crature, this night to be called to do, at my time o' life, what I never thought I was born to do? Oh!" he gave a lengthened groan, as one of his weeping daughters hung his little pouch across his protruding body—"too tight, Peggy, my love. Anty," to the other who knelt to button his gaiters—"God bless you, Anty!—If I'm never to see you again, Biddy," cautiously accepting his musket from his wife,—"Biddy, you'll take care of 'em if—" His feelings abruptly hurried him out of the room. But he stopped and hesitated at the hall-door, and stopt and hesitated again; framing many excuses to himself for a little respite of time; such as, "he forgot his snuff-box," or "he wanted to look at the flint of his fire-lock," or, "'he'd just wait while Anty ran up for his nightcap, and thrust it into his pocket."—At length he set forth, his wife and children hanging out of the windows to keep him in view as long as he was spared to their sight, and then they sank on chairs, brooding over their soldier's danger.

Sounds of alarm and battle through the town were anxiously listened for, as the signals of his immediate peril. But none such arose. In fact, the intelligence announced by Mr. Jennings's summoners proved a false alarm. At an advanced hour of the moring he was returned safe and sound to his family. "He's coming, mother!" shouted the daughters, who had been watching from a garret-window. "Aha, Peggy!" he replied, shouting up to his children from a distance, in a gay and triumphant tone—"they were afraid of us, the rascals!"

Hitherto, Eliza had been neglected. In the relief afforded by

Mr. Jennings's return, she found herself kindly and officiously attended to. Her wishes were consulted. She was served with tea, that modern and most grateful beverage to the weary, and then ushered to a bed-chamber. Where for some time we must leave her, enjoying repose, we hope, while we turn to other matters which nearly concern her.

CHAPTER XL.

THE little town of Ross is pleasantly, and, for all the purposes of trade and commerce, (if either would but come to it,) advantageously situated. In fortunate England, it would long ago have been a flourishing and wealthy place. In Ireland, thirty years ago it was, at the present day it is,—(only give some theorists their way, and at the day of judgment it will still be)—a few streets, half alive, with creeping attempts at petty traffic, and encumbered with a suburb of ruinous hovels, which poverty and wretchedness have marked for their own.

About a mile above it, two considerable rivers mingle their waters. Flowing beneath the wooded height, or by verdant meadow, their union forms the fine river of Ross, a quarter of a mile broad, almost of equal depth from bank to bank, and allowing, close to the quays of the town, safe anchorage for vessels of several hundred of tons burden.

Upon every side, hills rise precipitously above the more important streets, the suburb climbing with them, often against acclivities so sudden as to render the ascent of the pedestrian a work of much labour. From the opposite bank of the river a view peculiar as pleasing is commanded. Thence the distance is sufficient to obscure the frequent features of want and ruin in the poorer dwellings; thence are prominently visible the church and a mass of monastic ruins, mingling with and ennobling the cabins on the hill-side, all relieved by height and slope, meadow and plantation, and having for foreground below, the quay, and a few taper-masted vessels at its side.

Although styled New Ross, the little town claims to be of great antiquity. Four centuries since, it supported more than one monastery. Upon the ruins of one of these the Protestant church, at

present standing on the hill-side, has been erected. Beneath crumbling aisles, whence, in other days, floated the evening chant across the broad water, may yet be visited, close to this new place of worship, vaults, wherein lie scattered the blackened bones of the once powerful or revered ministers of an older ritual, whose knowledge, and often whose hands, reared the lofty structure which, destroyed by puritanical hatred, more than by the gradual touch of time, now refuses even a quiet grave to the relics of its ancient masters. And stories are related by local antiquaries of passages under the river to the monastery of Rossbercon, that crowns an opposite hill, and where the paltry steeple of a Roman Catholic chapel bears, to the pile that heretofore occupied its site, even a more humbling comparison in the minds of its visitors, than does the confronting church of the Establishment to the massive ruins with which it so badly groups.

Since 1641, when a battle of some moment was fought near to Ross—and when Cromwell, covering Ireland with desolation and carnage, anticipated time in destroying the pile we have alluded to—war had not visited the present scene of our tale. Partly, perhaps, on that account the artificial defences of Ross had been suffered to decay; or, as before supposed, may have been thrown down to allow of the extension of the streets.

Mr. Jennings received Eliza at one of the still standing gateways of its old walls. Three similar ones then existed at different points around the town. The complaisant sentinel was on post at the Friary-gate. Another on the hill above, and facing the north, gave entrance, through a thatched outlet, into the main street, which, winding down a long descent, led to the market-house. Whence diverged the various other principal streets.

The third gate, also standing on the summit of a hill, fronted the river. High above it, at right angles with the river, clambered, for half a mile in extent, the Irish-town, chiefly composed of the residences of the poorer classes. Here fairs were holden; and here stood the remains of the ancient stone-cross, assigned by Kitty Delouchery as the spot for her meeting with the credulous dragoon;—a meeting which, it is scare necessary to add, never took place. Whether or not the disappointed soldier adopted her alternative of "cutting in it two wid his soord," may however seem a question. It is answered in the negative, by stating that the cross can yet be viewed in an unsevered state. But it is not as positively stated that he did not, in his rage and chagrin, at least make the attempt.

From the last-mentioned gate, the third, the descent into the

town was indeed precipitous; requiring, from an inexperienced and unexcited visitor, much cautious watchfulness of his feet.

The fourth gate was situated in the hollow to the North, and only approachable down yet another hill. And rows of houses, or other considerable impediments, running upon the sites of the old defences, denied easy access to the town of Rose, except through these gates.

The reader will soon see the necessity of this description here; for amid a scene of quick and fiery action, we could scarce pause to supply it. And yet, in order that he may fully understand that coming scene, it is proper to make him acquainted with the localities of its ground.

Notwithstanding the good spirits in which he had returned to his afflicted family, Mr. Jennings was soon obliged to resume his military duties. Starting from a sleep, in which he would willingly have continued till the wars were over, the good man hastened forth in his pinching uniform, and shouldering his dreaded weapon, to join amid real bustle, his watchful corps.

Horse, foot, and artillery came clattering and thundering into the town. With all the importance of men chosen as its defenders, the formidable strangers went from house to house in search of the best quarters, ridiculing those who could not protect themselves, and bullying or threatening such as were suspected of disloyalty. In the course of the day they became variously occupied in defensive preparations. Some deepened the trenches before the old gateways; others grubbed the pavement of the streets ascending to them, in order to facilitate the labour of dragging up cannon, destined to be mounted at those important points; others strengthened the barriers. The corps not so employed underwent inspection by their officers; ammunition was served out to all. Amid the general clang and uproar, often might be heard the cries of unhappy wretches suffering torture to compel confession of their presumed knowledge of the plans of the insurgents.

As darkness came on, the sounds of preparation increased and deepened, while they varied. Drums beat to arms; the trumpets gave the note of equipment and muster. With brows of resolute care, the commanders went from post to post. And as each band prepared to stand to arms for the night, or hastened to an appointed position, levity was discarded from the soldier's carriage.

Scouts brought certain intelligence of the approach of the rude enemy, and before night had fully closed in, a moving black mass, composed of the body of the expected assailants, was seen, from the

height called Three-bullet-gate, clustering round a country-seat which stood on an eminence, about a mile distant. When they could no longer be observed amid the deepening darkness, their screams of defiance reached the town. Then, from the point which had commanded a view of their uncouth muster, guns were discharged against their position, with answer of readiness for encounter; and igniting their rusty and badly mounted engines with matches of twisted straw, the insurgents broke the gloom around their high encampment with retorted roar and explosion, while again the great shout of twenty thousand men told of anticipated triumph. The garrison they threatened was something more than fifteen hundred strong.

After this interchange of defiance, comparative silence ensued in the little town. But there was no relaxation from watchfulness amongst its defenders, no repose amongst its startled inhabitants. Furious assault being every instant expected, the soldiers stood at their respective positions mute or whispering, or calculating each unusual noise that reached their ears. The people, to whom every thing around them was novel, and whose notions of hostile contention were fearfully vague, experienced torturing suspense. In obedience to the peremptory commands of their protectors, they had extinguished their lights, shut up their dwellings, and assumed the stillness of repose; but, indeed, only assumed it. In every house the inmates crouched together, anticipating the struggle that was to decide their fate. Often did they interpret the sentinel's watch-word into the signal of attack, and start and tremble at the measured tread of the patroles.

The night advanced. All remained watchful, anxious, yet undisturbed. Amid this deep pause, two females were cautiously approaching the insurgent position, having escaped, Lord knows how, from the jealously-guarded town. By her curious hat, her low, burly figure, and her almost preternatural mode of stumping along, without the least sound, we recognise one of them to be Nanny the Knitter: the free-moving, erect, and tripping girl at her side, is Kitty Delouchery, sent by our heroine, with Nanny as her companion and ally, and after profound consultations between them all the live-long day, to discover tidings of Sir William Judkin, amongst the Wexford Army of Freedom; and, should he fortunately be discovered, to acquaint him with the present situation of his bride.

About four miles distant from Ross is the hill of Carrick-burne, one of those rocky elevations for which, as elsewhere mentioned, the County of Wexford is remarkable, and distinguished at a distance

by the hard outline its curiously-curving brow describes against the horizon.* On this eminence nearly the whole armed population of the county had lately assembled, and thence did twenty thousand of their body descend and take up, at Corbet-hill—the name of the country-seat previously mentioned—their position for the attack of Ross.

The mansion so called was one of some consequence. A lawn, bounded by a semicircular enclosure of trees, sloped to its rear: another, sheltered at either hand by shadowing screens of foliage, descended from the front-door.

Within less than an hour of dawn, the time at which Nanny the Knitter and Kitty Gow visited this place of encampment, few of the rudely-equipped force remained waking. Still covered solely by the serene summer sky, they stretched in dark masses upon both lawns, to the front and to the rear of the house; their sleep rendered intense by the fatigues of many days and nights, or else by the whiskey they had lately been quaffing, and which formed a considerable part of their commissariat stores. Some more cautious slumberers lay huddled together under the imaginary shelter of the branching trees, or in the ditch, beneath the inclosing fence. Female figures might be distinguished amid this silent multitude of human beings; and at their feet, or on their bosoms, children and infants. Families frequently slept together in these primitive encampments; and, perhaps, before the armed brother, or husband, or son, disposed himself for repose by their side, he first bent his steps to pull them a couch of green hay from the trodden meadow.

The greater number of the men had sank down, clasping their unburnished guns, or their pikes, closely in their arms, as if the business to be encountered at morning's dawn had formed their last waking thoughts. But many weapons, dropped from less careful hands, strewed the grass; others stood upright in the sod, having been stuck into it ere their owners lay down to sleep. Ill-fashioned

* This hill is also noted as a horrid remembrancer of the times we would illustrate. Beneath its rugged sides, where a patch of soft verdure contrasts with the surrounding barrenness, stood a large barn, used as a prison by the infuriated insurgents, in which a number of human beings, of the two sexes, and of every age, were burnt alive. Whether or not this abominable act is to be visited on the general body of the armed peasants, remains a question. Their historians or apologists deny that it is so, and by their statements we are instructed to seek for the authors of the hideous occurrence amongst the cowardly, who had fled from battle, or the ferocious, who were maddened into revenge by burnings and torturings inflicted on themselves or upon their relatives, or committed a short distance from the site of the memorable barn.

flags, with rude devices, generally green, but often of every other colour, save that of the detested orange, drooped in the breezeless night upon poles fixed in the earth. These were intended as rallying points for distinct throngs at the morning's muster. In the middle of the front lawn appeared five or six ill-matched cannon, two of which were tied with ropes to those small rustic cars, peculiar, we believe, to Ireland.

The principal leaders had taken up their quarters in Corbet-hill House; and the scene described would have been one of almost breathless silence, but that some of their number, the commander-in-chief, as he was called, at their head, yet prolonged, amid disjointed arguments upon the issue of the coming day, vociferation or wild shouts of ebriety, which echoing over the lawns, were the only sounds succeeding to the late cries and clamour of twenty thousand tongues. Nor, indeed, did these few signs of waking, where so many slumbered, take away from the deep effect of general repose, nor derive, from the close presence of the stilled host, any thing to disturb the idea that they bespoke a scene of worse than solitary enjoyment.

As yet unobserved and unquestioned, Nanny and Kitty cautiously approached the avenue that led to the house.

"An' there's no doubt, Nanny, but we'll find him here?" asked Kitty, in a whisper.

"He's here, I'm tould, of a sart'nty, Kitty, my honey pet. More's the pity;—what 'ill become of him when the wars is over, I wondher?"

"Sure the Croppies 'll gain the day, Nanny."

"Ntchu. Ntchu. God help your young head, Kitty, my pet! No, nor the night, neither. King George 'ill have the upper hand, in the long run, as sure as I'm a lump of a sinner."

"Stop, your sowl—listen to that—maybe there's not friends near us," said Kitty. Both listened to the burden of a song, chanted in loud though not unpleasing tones, some short distance in the direction they were taking. After the burden the whole song was gone through, and is here presented, as a genuine specimen of the ballad-making talent of many of the insurgents.

"On Oulard-hill the war it begun,
An' it's there we gained the North-Corkman's gun;
To take Enniscorthy then was our intent,
An' we're the boys that'll pay no rent.
Sing the-too-rol-lol, fol-the-too-rol-lee,
Fol, lol, lol, fol-the-too-rol-lee!

Long life to Father John, an' long may he reign,
Capt'n Perry also, an' Edmun' Kane,
It's they will win both counthry an toun,
An' we'll never give up till we pull the Orange down.
Sing, &c.

Come hither, my boys, that never war afraid,
To walk all night wid your green cockade,
Showldher after me your pike an' gun,
Every one like ould Grawna's son.
Sing, &c."

A loud and long "all's well!" pealed from the singer's throat as he ended his ditty, and was taken up and repeated by many other voices, near and distant, around the encampment. For, in imitation of the more regular force they opposed, the insurgents, catching the watchword from the nearer videttes, pushed beyond the gates of Ross, thus endeavoured to manifest their important pretensions to the character of a regular army.

With exulting alertness, Kitty Delouchery tripped forward some paces, and clearing her pipe, chanted in her best key, and that was not a bad one, the following responses to the sentinel's song.

"Farewell, my tendher Kitty, it is my cruel fate,
To desert my ruined dwelling, no longer can I wait;
The green flag it is flying, with its harp and shining shield,
An' the Waxford boys, like lions bould, are marching to the field;—
How they shout out to rouse me! and those words they say,
Arise my Waxford champions, and to victory take your way!"

"Success to your pipe, you duck o' the world!" cried the sentinel, running forward. "Come here till I take you prisoner, you rogue, you."

But in some misgiving, Kitty drew back into the shade, as she caught imperfectly a view of the figure that approached. The song, and the tone in which it had been executed, proclaimed Tim Reily. Not so did the caparison of the man she now beheld before her.

"Where are you, my darlin'?" he continued. "By the pike in my hand, I'll have you, supposin' I run fifty miles a-head!—Aha! maybe you think I don't see you!" he cried, grasping Nanny the Knitter by the shoulder.

"I'm only a poor ould sinner, my honey,"—began Nanny, in her usual formula of petition. The grasp was loosened.

"Och! tundher-an'-turf! an' sure I made a mistake. It's not nath'ral to me, faith, to ketch hoult of an ould woman, instid of a young girl. Arrah, then, Nanny, wasn't Kitty Delouchery wid

you?—I'd swear ten oaths 'twas she gave a parth o' the song I made for her."

"Hi, hi!" giggled Kitty from her covert, now certain of her man, notwithstanding his very suspicious equipment.

"An' maybe I don't know the manin' o' that," shouted Tim, as he capered to seek her. There was an instant's shuffling under the deep shadow of the trees, which Nanny could not precisely make out. But after, as she called it some "hugger-mugger" discourse, she overheard the following conversation.

"Ah, then, for goodness sake, Tim, what sort of a dhress is that upon you? I'd lay a bet I seen the likes on some o' King George's sogers."

"Faix, an' maybe you did! It's a sin an' a shame that the daylight isn't wid us, till you'd see me proper. Divil so purty a Hoossian ever your too eyes opened on, a-lanna."

"A Hoossian!—English me that, Tim, an' I'll say thankee."

"Why, then, I'll tell you, Kitty, my duck. Them Hoossians, they're horse-throopers that's come from for'n parts to fight the poor Croppies. If you war to hear 'em spakin'!—the likes o' their talk never came out of a Christhen mouth afore. Bud there's one comfort; it isn't Christhen mouths is on their ugly faces. An' they have two whiskers o' beard over their lips; an' they discoorse like born brothers wid their horses. *Urragh vulluck*, they say, an' then the horses makes answer afther the same fashion."

"Sure you're makin' fun, Tim."

"In throth I'm not, Kitty, but as downright arnest as ever I was in my life."

"You might asy be that, Tim."

"What matther, a-lanna. We can't be merry in the grave; so, we'll laugh an' be fat here, on the face o' the livin' earth. Bud, as I was sayin' to you, them Hoossians are great bastes for purshuin' the poor counthry girls at every hand's turn. I was comin' along the road, wid the pike in my fist, an' I seen a Hoossian ridin' agin me, an' I hid myself to let him pass by. The thruth of a nate purty crature, crossed a stile, at the same time, an' he spurred his horse afther her, an' as they both war comin' near me, I stepped out a bit. She ran to me, callin' me honest boy, an' axin me to save her. Up comes the Hoossian gallopin': '*ullagh gulluch ghrow fraw thruff*,' says he to myself; '*ulluch, gulluch, gruff*, an' to the ould Divil wid you!' says I. At the word he reined back his horse, an made him dance on his hinder legs, that he might have a good slash at me. Bud I was afore hand wid him. The pike slipt into

the horse's heart, afther a manner it has; ay, an' before he could say *gulluch gruff* to me again, it slipt through his own heart."

"Stout was your fist, Tim! So that's the way you got your quare clothes?"

"Faix, an' it is, Kitty! I began to look at him, when I had the time for it. Says I to mysef, isn't this a green jacket an' a green breeches on the baste of a fellow? Sure green is the poor Croppy's colour, an' maybe I won't put 'em on my own sef, jest to be like any soger. So I was skinnin' him of the both, when up comes another Croppy, goin' for the camp, too. 'I cry halves,' he says; 'Bother!' says I, makin' answer the way he desarved; 'bother, my boy, go an' kill a Hoossian for yoursef."*

Much more characteristic conversation ensued between them, ere Tim at length thought of inquiring why his mistress was thus rambling at night. But as soon as he ascertained the nature of her mission to "the camp," he at once confirmed Nanny's surmises that Sir William was at present amongst the insurgent force on the height. Only stipulating that so long as they remained unobserved, his protecting arm should encircle her waist—(Nanny was not, and indeed did not consider herself a critic from whom any such little freedom ought to be disguised,)—Tim then led Kitty in search of the Baronet; the reflection that his young mistress was thereby to be served, adding energy to his zeal.

While the great throng assembled for the assault of Ross lay sunk in deepest sleep, and while the most convivial of their captains prolonged their midnight revelry, there was one who neither sought to share the oblivious slumbers of the first, nor the care-drowning libations of the others. With arms folded hard across his body, he paced up and down before the door of Corbet Hill-house. Sometimes he would pause, and seemingly after a moment's thought stamp violently with either foot, and again resume his hurried and irregular strides.

"If I'm not a blind man, Kitty, my duck;—an' sure, if I was, you wouldn't be dyin' in love wid me as you are;—there's the gintleman you want," said Tim Reily.

"Faix, my honey, it's him sure enough! Make up to him, both o' ye, an' tell him your errand; becase I'd rather of the two not to go near him," remarked Nanny.

* An expression really originating from the Insurrection of 1798, and well-known all over Ireland, though for the first time traced to its real source. Indeed, it has become a bye-word in the sister-island; tantamount to, "win gold and wear it."

"Why so, Nanny?" asked Kitty.

"He hasn't a likin' for me, I believe. He was onct goin' to toss my poor lump of a body out of a windee. An' that 'ud be the death o' me, there's no doubt."

Tim and Kitty approached Sir William. He seemed unconscious of their presence until Tim accosted him.

"Here's a purty little girl, your honour;"—holding Kitty by the arm.

"What does she want, fellow?" questioned the Baronet, stopping suddenly, and speaking so vehemently that both sprang backward.

"She only wants to be spakin' wid your honour," resumed Tim, in a voice of humility.

"Pitch her to the thousand furies!" cried Sir William; "she and all of her sex—And, begone, scoundrel!"

"Pitch her where?" muttered Tim, closing his fingers on his pike handle. "Show me the man that'll pitch her anywhere, half a quarter of a yard, an' he won't be thankful for his trouble!"

"Never heed the poor young gintleman, Tim. He's cracked wid his thrials, an' doesn't know what he's sayin'," whispered Kitty.

"Thrue for you, Kitty. Bud I forgot it when he talked o' doin' anything to you."

"Tim is only comin' to tell your honour where to find the poor young misthress," resumed Kitty.

"Hah!" Sir William again stopped and eagerly fixed his eyes on them,—"where to find Lady Judkin, you mean?"

"Yes, Sir. My lady is in an honest house in the town, there below, an' longin' in her heart to see your honour."

"Lead me thither instantly!" he cried in high exultation, striking his hands together.

The impossibility of getting into Ross unobserved now that the day had begun to break, was stated to him by Kitty and Tim, in a breath, "But," continued Kitty, "when the night comes again, I'll lade your honour, by a way I know, to the very house, an' into the house, more betoken."

"Faith, we'll all be in Ross town afore the next night, Kitty—else what did we come here for?" said Tim.

"True, my lad! true! Ay—before the sun is two hours over the hills!" He rushed from them to the door of the house. "Come! I'll live a day yet and perhaps not in vain!—enjoyment—triumph—revenge—then, death the next instant, and I can laugh in his face in my last gasp!"

He broke into the house. He announced the morning light to the scarce sober leaders. He ran out from them, first to the front, and then to the back lawn, and shouted away the sleep from the yet slumbering multitude. With the earliest blush of a lovely morning, all was stir and bustle, where but a moment previous all had been forgetfulness and silence.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE banners were quickly snatched up: their bearers, waving them to and fro, loudly repeated the names of the parishes to which each belonged, as the shortest method of mustering their followers. In broken groups the natives of different districts rushed to obey the summons. The principal leaders mounted their horses. Amongst them the dingy sables of four priests contrasted oddly with their martial weapons.

The person who had been appointed commander-in-chief, a Protestant gentleman of considerable property in the country, and much deficient, by the way, in the mental endowments necessary for his new station, had begun, according to previous plans, to divide his forces for the attack, when Sir William Judkin observed a horseman bearing a white handkerchief on a pole, prepare to set out towards the town. He guessed his purpose.

"You go with a flag of parley, Sir?"

"With a summons to surrender, Sir William. Which, if they're wise they'll listen to."

"I am with you, if you do not object."

"'Tis a mission of some danger; but your company is welcome, since you offer."

Sir William thanked this person, who seemed a man somewhat above the middle rank. A green ribbon round his hat, and another crossing his shoulder, bespoke a leader of importance. A brace of pistols, and a sheathed sabre, most probably the spoils of conquest, were thrust into a strap that encircled his waist.

At a brisk pace they advanced to the town. They were within a quarter of a mile of one of the gates, and could see the soldiers drawn out before the barriers, as they had been stationed during night, ready for encounter.

"Halt, and give the counter-sign!" cried a sentinel in advance.

"A flag to your general," answered the herald, waving his emblem of office. Almost before he heard the explosion that sent the bullet through his brain, he fell dead from his saddle. Sir William fired in return, missed his man, and then galloped back, while a volley from the line that covered the gate followed his retreat. As he rode up to Corbet-hill House, he could see that many balls which had missed and passed him, had made victims among the stragglers at the bottom of the eminence.

"Where's my master, Sir?" cried a stripling of sixteen, catching at his bridle as he rode on. "Where's Mr. Furlong, that went wid the flag?"

"Shot, my man!" and Sir William broke from him, but not before he heard—

"Why, then, may the Orange conquer us! but I'll have the best blood among 'em for my masther's." And the lad, peering at the flint of his pistol, mingled with the crowd.

It had been loosely planned by the leaders, while inspired by the libations of the preceding night, that their force should be divided into three bodies, destined to assault Ross, simultaneously, at three distinct points. But the attempt to carry this resolution into effect was attended with no little difficulty. They were, in truth, but the heads of a mob, yet unreduced to any thing like order, yet unconscious of good to be derived from previous arrangement, and who could form no idea of attack, save that inspired by wild impulse, and obeyed by one furious rush upon their foes. When, therefore, the captains spoke of precaution, and of a plan, they were only understood to be actuated by doubts of success as to the issue of a bold onset. A vague notion of danger, already apprehended, began to pervade the assemblage.

The leaders themselves, mostly pushed into reputation and ascendancy by the personal prowess that had urged them to head their followers through the thickest danger, but otherwise unfitted for command, proved as incompetent to execute their purpose, as did the rude force to understand it. A necessity for a divided yet regular attack had been half-impressed on their minds. But they came to their preparatory task without reflection, and consequently could not apply themselves to arranging, in detail, the crude materials which were to be directed to their object.

When Sir William Judkin approached the position he had just left, the attempted preparations for the coming fight produced therefore such a scene of tumult, as already boded the impractica-

bility of acting upon any cool plan. The commanders vociferated orders often different to one and the same band; or cursed, or imprecated, or used violence to enforce them. The men as loudly exhorted each other, or rejected the authority which enjoined movements they could not comprehend, or were afraid to obey. Mingling and hustling, and dividing, and mingling again, the unmanageable mass wavered over the brow of the eminence. While from the out-posts of their watchful enemies, well-directed volleys often brought down numbers amongst them, increasing, doubtless, the general disinclination to onset.

At this moment Sir William Judkin spurred into the middle of the concourse.

"All accommodation is at an end!" he shouted. "Your flag has been insulted!—your messenger shot by my side! Down upon them, Wexford boys! if only for revenge!"

This appeal, seeming to advise the only mode of proceeding that could be relished, partially supplied the impulse that was wanted. The motive for immediate vengeance passed from tongue to tongue. A resolved and desperate shout followed. As if by general assent, a great number flung aside their coats, shoes, and stockings. And before the uncombined movement could be checked, seven thousand screaming men, those with fire-arms leading the van, while the black-headed pikes bristled high over the heads of their main body, were rushing down the hill upon Ross.

Confusion and dismay ensued amongst the chief leaders, left behind, with nearly two-thirds of their whole force. All their plans were thus accidentally dirarranged, and they stood powerless. The person called commander-in-chief exerted his voice to arrest the progress of the impetuous detachment; but he was not heeded. Some of his inferior officers, seeing it useless to remonstrate any longer, hastened down from Corbet-hill, to place themselves at the head of those whom they could not control. Others, still hoping to connect with the sudden diversion, a simultaneous attack upon the town, at three points, laboured to divide and separately to direct the great body around them. But their agitation and unassured manner quickly communicated itself to their followers. Their want of judicious method added to the impression. At the ill-judged cry of "Down, Wexford men, or all is lost!" they were left almost alone on the height, the distracted mob flying with their backs to Ross: so that of twenty thousand, destined the previous evening to seize upon the town, little more than eight thousand engaged in the affair.

And at the head of these eight thousand. driven onward by his seconders, rather than leading them, did Sir William Judkin now spur his horse.

The mad shouts of the assailants sank into silent purpose, as they drove through the way leading to the verge of the descent, at the bottom of which Ross was situated. The advanced sentinels fled before them. They heard the gallop of horse coming on. They paused. Dragoons swept around a curve of the road, and charged at a gallop. With a renewed yell the insurgents rushed to meet them. Fire-arms were discharged on both sides. Numbers of the peasant force fell. They pressed over the bodies of their companions, now showing a front of pikes. Again the dragoons fired, then wheeled round, and rapidly retreated. Their foes quickened their tramp to a race.

The horsemen, in sweeping upon the town, dispirited. by their flight, the advanced body of infantry at the gate, who faced about, not waiting the assailants. Sir William Judkin saw his men come close upon the entrenched and barricaded entrance. Here, cannon opened upon them, each shot making a path through the thickly-wedged mass, and promising to protect the dragoons who, hard pressed by bare-footed foes, almost as fleet as the beasts they bestrode, and not able to cross the deep trench before them, wheeled to the right, down a narrow way, leading into the centre of the suburb before described as stretching from the Fair-gate up the heights over the town.

"Surround them in the *Boreen-na-Slaunagh!*" shouted Sir William. Answered by a fierce cry, he led part of his adherents over a fence near at hand, and was followed at a speed that put his horse to his mettle.

The result answered his expectations. He and his detachment were on the narrow road before the dragoons. The remaining force pressed them in the rear.

"Now, my boys, no quarter! Some of them are Talbot's hangmen!"

His advice was scarcely necessary. The dragoons could but once draw their triggers, when, except two, who broke in desperation through the throng, and galloped, at peril of their necks, down almost a precipice into the town, they were piked to death in a few minutes. Even their horses, as if identified with themselves, shared the hate, the rage, and the deadly thrusts which so quickly dispatched the riders. And while still engaged in their work of slaughter, the exulting yells of the victors rang with ominous effect through the town below.

"To the Three-bullet-gate, my gallant boys!" again cheered their young leader. Again an answering shout prefaced their return to that important point: and they bounded upward with unslackened speed.

The cannon did not now roar at them, as a second time they thronged to its mouth. An officer, visibly of rank,—a commander of title, indeed,—appeared on horseback between them and the trench, waving his sword in token of parley. The insurgent body suddenly halted close to him.

"What is it you seek, my lads?" he began. While he spoke, a bare-legged boy advanced closer than the others, as if stupidly attending to his address. "Why do you thus foolishly oppose the King's forces? State your demands to me, and if a compromise can be effected, we will avoid the shedding of blood—"

Ere the last words were wafted from his lips, the strippling's aspect changed into the fierce wildness of the tiger. Snatching a pistol from his bosom, he shot the noble mediator through the heart, who instantly tumbled into the trench.

"Now, masther, there's a life for your life!" cried the young assassin, bounding high in ecstasy. "It wasn't to see you killed widout a life for it, that you brought me up undher your roof."

The field-pieces on the trench flashed and bellowed; the infantry drawn up behind it sent in their accompanying volleys; guns from the hill-side within the town supported both. Numbers of the insurgent throngs paid forfeit for the much-regretted (and still-regretted) life thus treacherously taken.

But the maddened assailants, mounting upon the heaps of slain which rapidly filled the trench, only redoubled their efforts to possess the gate. They were repulsed three times, steadily, and with great loss. A fourth time had the gunners loaded to sweep back a fourth assault, and their matches were approaching the guns, when from a wall to the right of the gate, and to which the trench ran, jumped a band of almost naked men, who to gain this point had taken an unobserved circuit. Before they could be aware of their danger, the cannoneers lay stretched under their carriages. In another instant the guns were wheeled round and discharged upon their own infantry. At the same time, the main force of the insurgents easily crossed the trench, over the dead bodies that filled it, and, pike in hand, followed up the unexpected salute by a charge. Their fury, their numbers, and their fearful weapon, could not be resisted. As the retreating soldiers descended the steep street into the middle of the town, the cannon was once more discharged upon them. The screaming foe

sprang down in pursuit, sometimes checked by a murderous volley sent up from the infantry, who would momentarily pause and face round to give it; sometimes by the bayonet, which, with little chance of success, clashed against the pike.

Beside those who entered by the gate, numbers came pouring down the hilly suburb and streets that faced the river. Wherever a musket flashed, they sprang to its muzzle, still shouting at death, and overwhelming opposition. They gained the outskirts of the lower and principal part of the town, where stood the market-house, a building with open arches below, and with public-rooms overhead, surmounted by a cupola.

Here almost the whole remaining garrison had become concentrated: here was the sturdiest struggle. Even as the assailants rushed down the street which led to this little citadel, volley after volley thinned their ranks At a closer approach, cannon again blasted showers of shot upon them from beneath the arches, and from every window overhead the glittering tubes of infantry well seconded the larger engines; while between each pause of the fire, horsemen charged against the rushing concourse. The contest gradually became astounding. In answer to the harsh and incessant explosions of musketry, and the bellowing of the guns, the insurgents sent back their hoarse yet tremendous shouts. Over heaps and heaps of their own slain they continued to bound, always driving back the dragoons. To eke out the din and the fury of the scene, the crackling and roar of burning dwellings, and the shivering of windows by ball, or by the exploding air within, soon began to be heard, and the smoke of conflagration mingled with that of the hot engagement.

Amid this scene was the fate of Eliza Hartley to be decided.

She stood in an open window of Mr. Jennings's house, near to the market-place, but out of range of the volleys thence sent forth, endeavouring to catch, through the clamour of human voices which added to the general roar and clang, the accent of one voice that it would have been joy to hear; to select from amongst the dense phalanx of insurgents, the figure of one individual, for whose safety her prayers fervently petitioned Heaven.

A horseman spurred his jaded horse up an unencumbered street towards her.

"It's he, my lady!" shouted Kitty Delouchery, who stood by her side; and the girl quickly descended to admit Sir William Judkin, while Eliza extended her arms towards her husband. She saw him halt, look up, brush his bloody hand across his forehead and eyes,

as if to clear his vision, and look up again. Then he took off his hat, and waved it.

"Hasten!" cried Eliza. "Beloved!" he shouted in reply, and spurred to the door.

"Oh, hasten, hasten!"—repeated Eliza, as another horseman, whom previously her anxious eye had caught, closed on Sir William, darting the rowels into his steed until, at each spring forward, the animal's hoofs struck sparks from the pavement.

"Turn, rebel!—turn from that house!"—exclaimed the pursuer, in the well-known tones of Talbot. His sabre was bared and raised, almost over his rival's head.

"My husband! Spare my husband!" cried Eliza. She was unheard amid the din around, or, if heard, unheeded by the ears to which she addressed herself. Sir William wheeled about. Distinct from every other sound of strife, she caught his screaming accents.

"By the Heavens, this is sweet! My love and my triumph together!"—

Eliza leaned from the window, unconscious of danger, for she saw but two persons in deadly conflict, where thousands were striking for each other's heart's-blood. The arms ware stretched forward, and, at first, her hands remained apart. But suddenly she struck them together, her fingers entwined, her white lips parted, her rounded eyes seemed as if they would fly to the objects that fascinated them, and her unequal breath, previously kept in, escaped slowly, as though fearful to disturb her eager watchfulness.

Sir William was armed with a rude weapon. It had been a pike, but the handle had become shivered, leaving it no more than about four feet in length, of which the blade was nearly two. Holding this in his bridle-hand, he drew a pistol with his right, and fired. The ball whizzed harmlessly. He changed the fragment of a pike from one hand to the other, and raising it high, spurred against his watchful opponent. By adroitly wheeling round, Talbot narrowly avoided the deadly thrust, while with the force of his onset, Sir William passed him, losing his weapon. Then Eliza saw her dreaded enemy approach within a few feet of her defenceless husband, and deliberately aiming at his knee, indeed almost pressing the muzzle of the pistol to the joint, pull the trigger. The ball seemed to have maimed the horse as well as the rider, for both tumbled on the street, and became entanged, until the plunging animal rolled over Sir William, apparently crushing him to death. Then it more deafening than any that had preceded it; her

failing eyes beheld a body of routed horse driven past the house by a throng of half-naked men. They galloped over the prostrate Sir William; they made a momentary stand; they discharged their carbines. The insurgents closed with them; heaps of dead bodies, men and horses, rose above her husband and his steed. The discomfited dragoons again fled; the charging-pikemen yelled and raced after them. Eliza gave a faint cry; the rush, the shout, the explosion faded from her senses; and she fell into Kitty Delouchery's arms.

The insurgents drove the main force of the garrison out of the town of Ross. Over the wooden-bridge that spans its broad river, horse, foot, and artillery rushed together, and ascending the hill at the opposite side, were lost to view. The long, winding street leading from the gateway where the attack had begun, was strewn with slain, ten insurgents for one of the King's troops, making up the number of the slaughtered. Upon the height, over the town, springs a little stream of limpid water, falling in transparent spouts, at different intervals, from basin to basin, until it reaches the lower streets: this constantly running streamlet was discoloured with blood. Yet were the insurgents victors. Or at least, it was only needful for them to act upon the advantages already gained, in order really to command that name. The handful of infantry, and the few cannon which yet remained, rather out of necessity than as opponents, in the market-house, presented an easy conquest.

But the undisciplined and riotous mob, bellowing amid the carnage of their companions, broke into the houses, siezed upon whatever liquor they could find, and in the fever of intoxication, forgot that they were yet exposed to a reverse of fortune.

An inhabitant of the town followed the retreating army, and informed its officers that their ferocious foes had already become changed into a powerless rabble. The officers returned to the height commanding the town, to reconnoitre. They saw the flames of burning houses ascending at different points, but the flag of England yet fluttered over the barracks; instead of the ferocious shout of wild carnage, the less frequent scream of drunkenness arose from the principal streets. At intervals, too, the discharge of artillery and musketry from the market-house, directed against some faint and reeling attack, told that Ross might yet be recovered.

The defeated force rallied. The militia regiment, whose Colonel had been killed by the revengeful stripling, thirsted for a renewed engagement. Their spirit became diffused through every bosom; al descended towards the river. Horses, men, and cannon once more thundered over the wooden bridge.

The conquerors were dispersed in all the confusion and riot of inebriety. As the drums beat, and the trumpets blew, and the rolling volleys again made havoc among them, some hastily snatched their arms. But numbers, unable to make the slightest opposition, fell easy and merited victims to the thursting bayonet, the dragoon's sabre, or the trambling hoofs of his horse. Separate bands encountered detatchments of the soldiers at every corner of the streets, and in every alley. Amid sudden shouts, and rush, and encounter, the contention was as desultory as it was bloody.

In a short time, all of the insurgents who could wield a weapon, forced their way to the end of the street, down which they had driven their opponents in the morning. Two squares of the market-house commanded them in this situation. Additional cannon rattled to its arches; and from beneath the shivering building volleys of grape-shot still made roads through their diminished throngs, while upon all sides combined discharges of musketry told with almost equal effect. Wherever, in pauses between the explosions, horsemen charged through the openings thus cleared in the insurgent mass, the despairing men still evinced courage, driving their assaulters pell-mell back upon the infantry and artillery, and following, while they dealt death around, to the very mouths of the guns, whence they were blown peicemeal along the streets, until the heaped dead made farther approach to the market-house difficult. Those who bore fire-arms loaded and fired while they retained a charge of powder and ball. Then handing their pieces to their women, they received pikes in return, and sought desperately to continue the contest. But unable to come to close quarters, and after having stood repeated discharges of cannon, and of every kind of lesser engine, they at length retreated up the ascending street, with a celerity too rapid for regular pursuit, leaving nearly a third of their body dead behind them, and thus abandoning the conquest they had sacrificed so much to achieve.

CHAPTER XLII.

Many were the scenes of horror in the streets of Ross after the departure of the furious foe; but of all such, two principally concern the story.

Upon the spot where Eliza had seen her husband fall, buried beneath his own plunging horse and a pile of slain, appeared a woman and a man, both busily employed in turning over the dead bodies.

"Here the young rascal lies!" said the man, in a ruffianly tone. "We must get him from undher the horse."

"Is he dead?" asked the woman solemnly.

"The best o' the two is dead," he was answered. "The good horse is kilt outright; but there's a gasp in *him* yet."

"Whoever you are," Sir William Judkin feebly cried, "you torture me.—Hold! hold!" as they endeavoured to free him of the stiffened animal whose carcass lay across his thigh.—"My arm is broken, and this limb is shattered."

"Hah!" said the woman, as if communing with herself—"gay and sonorous accents of days gone by; is it to this ye are changed?" then addressing Sir William—"Do you know me?" she asked.

"Touch me not, fiend!" he screamed aloud.

"At last you are mine!" she resumed; "yes, mine. In my power, at my mercy, to deal with you as I like. This is no place or time for our last converse,—but there is a silent and a fit spot where we shall speak together, where none shall break in upon our dialogue, where no sound shall interrupt our words, and yet where we shall come to a reckoning before meet witnesses. Raise him," she said, addressing Bill Nale. "Is your comrade at hand to assist you?"

"No, by the living farmer! God be wid you, poor Sam! One o' the greatest mistakes o' this day, however it come to pass, was to let the hemp that was growin' for you wait for a betther man. Bud no matther. There's one 'ill help me at the corner o' the next sthreet, instid o' him. One that, since he hard tell o' the thricks o' this youth, 'ud lend him any helpin' hand we may want."

"You mean John Delouchery?"

"Or a body very much like him."

"Come then," and she assisted with her own hands in bearing the now insensible Sir William to the spot where Shawn-a-Gow waited for them. Then all gained the height above the town with their nearly lifeless burden, entered the church-yard, and descended to the dripping vaults beneath the ruined monastery.

"Lay him here," said the woman—"Here, amid the relics of the dead and gone, let him commune in solitude with these rattling bones. At the proper time ye know whither he is to be conveyed; meanwhile I have something to do." Again she bent her steps towards the lower town.

As she strode through the streets leading from Three-bullet-gate to the market-house, a number of yeoman cavalry were galloping down its steep descent, after a last discomfited charge upon the retreating insurgents. The men, many of them wounded, appeared in much disorder, and their officers' voices were heard high in reproach. The woman paused an instant, glanced observantly and eagerly from one to another of the officers, then darted like an arrow through the horses, and seized Captain Talbot's bridle.

"Will you save Eliza Hartley from destruction?" she asked, looking up into his haggard face.

"How? where—what do you mean?"

"Look!" she answered, pointing to Mr. Jennings' house, which was in flames. "They have left her in it alone—Shawn-a-Gow forced off his daughter from the door—all fled for safety, and she was forgotten. You must brave fire and smoke to save her—you may perish with her, but there *is* a chance yet—a slight one—You, and only you will take that chance for Eliza Hartley's sake!"

"Two of you follow me," said Talbot, speaking to the men by his side; and he spurred over the dead and wounded, staining the fetlocks of his horse with blood. The woman quickened her pace to keep him in view. Flames were bursting through the lower widows, and through the door of Mr. Jennings's house, throwing a glare even in the broad day. The crackle of wood within told the progress of the fierce element, and smoke which rushed from the shivered widows of the first story, warned the spectators that through them also it would soon shoot forth.

At the garret-window, built upon the unparapeted roof, stood Eliza Hartley, indistinctly seen, even in her high situation, amid the curling smoke. Her piercing shrieks sounded the agony of her despair. The prospect of a shocking death, distinctly beheld in its terrible advances, inspired even her wretched heart with the instinct for life. There was no time for deliberation. Talbot, aided by his daring companions, quickly disencumbered himself of his accoutrements, jacket and boots, and then stood upon his saddle, under one of the windows of the first story, endeavouring to balance his agitated limbs for a bound. The woman held the bridle of his trembling steed, and covered its eyes with the adventurer's jacket, that it might not see the rushing flames which now almost enveloped it. After a few seconds, Talbot stood firmly on the animals back, his eyes fixed on the window-stool. He couched himself, darted upward, grasped his object, stood upon it. His scorched and terrified horse broke away, and galloped down the street. An

instant he paused for breath, perhaps for resolution, as he looked into the room within. Then he dashed through the window, which was shut down, shattering its frame and remaining glass, and disappeared. Simultaneously, a red column burst out from the opening thus made. Those below looked on in breathless silence. They were startled by a crash, evidently caused by the falling in of the floor of the apartment he had just entered.

"Lost together!" exclaimed the woman who had urged him to this desperate attempt. The men of his corps, and a crowd of other persons groaned an assent to her words. But looking up to the garret where Eliza had first appeared, as her renewed shrieks challenged their attention, they saw his blackened figure supporting what seemed now to be the lifeless body of our heroine, for her head drooped over his shoulder, and her arms swung without voluntary action. He spoke, he roared, but little more than the movement of his lips and the working of his features could be caught amid the overmastering roar of the flames. He waved his disengaged arm violently, but the yeomen did not understand his gestures. The woman, however, seemed to have done so, for she disappeared suddenly from amongst them.

Flashes began to quiver in the room at the backs of Talbot and Eliza, and accumulating volumes of smoke almost hid them from view. The men, in loud and afflicted accents, anticipated every instant the falling in of the second and only remaining floor of the house. They shouted loud, as much in despair as in applause, when they saw him, still clasping Eliza, issue from the window, and stand on the slates at its edge, while one hand clung to its pointed top. Some had run for a ladder, as the only means of rescue that occurred to them; others screamed for those to return with it.

"Five minutes more, and they're gone!" cried one of the yeomen. "But look there—see the woman coming out through the skylight on the next roof! She's making way to them!—that's brave, that's brave!"

"She's a fearless woman," said another—"I'd face the Croppies' pikes once again, sooner than venture along them slates!"

The roof of the adjoining house had not indeed any more than Mr. Jennings's, a protecting parapet. Yet along its smooth slope the woman continued to direct her course. A rope secured or held tight by some persons within the skylight, was passed round her body, and she grasped in her hand some sharp-edged instrument, with which she broke away the slates to make resting-places for her feet previous to each step she took.

She gained the spot where the swarth figure of Talbot yet remained, barely visible. The hushed spectators saw her admonish him by gestures to hold her skirts with the hand that clung to the last window-top of the nearly consumed house. Thick clouds of smoke wrapped both. When for an instant it was wafted aside, she and he appeared half-way across the adjacent roof, the woman leading, propped upon her sharp instrument, at every cautious and lengthened step. Talbot, as she had exhorted him to do, guided himself by touching her garments, while the senseless Eliza still rested on his right shoulder. It was evident that judicious hands within gradually drew the rope tight, as the female, to whose body it was attached, came near and nearer to them, so as to afford her additional support and confidence on her perilous return to the open skylight.

Those below, silent and aghast, thrilled to see her and Talbot's progress over the shelving and slippery surface, from which one false step had hurled all to certain death. Their feelings underwent strong excitement between joy at the escape from the flames, fear of the peril yet unpast, and admiration of the courage and presence of mind of Talbot and his ally. Sometimes loose slates fell into the street, and they were ready to cry out in terror and lamentation. Still the bold adventurers appeared safe, and still the crowd was silent. In a few seconds all suspense ended. The woman gained the opening in the roof, disappeared through it, reached out her arms to relieve Talbot of his burden, received the unconscious Eliza, and then Talbot plunged after both, and the breathless pause below was broken by a heart-stirring cheer.

They were shortly in the lower part of the house, which already had begun to catch fire.

"You have shown yourself a brave and a bold man," said the woman, addressing her companion, while he staggered and stared around him, now but half conscious of what had occurred.

"Heavenly Powers! Is she safe? Have we indeed snatched her from the dreadful flames? *Is* she saved?—where is she?"

"In your arms," said the woman.

With a faint cry of joy he bent his eyes on Eliza's pallid face.

"Fear not," resumed his companion, as she saw him start, "'tis but a swoon."

He dropped on his knees. "Almighty Providence!" he sobbed, "the thanks and the praise to Thee! Thy hand alone could have guided us!" He drooped his head over his mistress's bosom, and wept aloud.

When Eliza regained imperfect sense, she became half aware that she sat in a carriage supported by a woman, but by whom she did not raise her head nor open her lips to ask. The different horrors she had that day experienced, vaguely blended together in her mind, kept her stunned and silent. The vehicle proceeded towards its destination; she did not even inquire whither it bore her. In truth she cared not whither. It reached, without her observation, the house, near to Dunbrody, from which by Nanny's agency, she had so lately escaped. She was helped out of it. Accompanied by her fellow-traveller, guided by Mrs. Nelly, and bowed to by Robert as she went along, she gained her former chamber, still unconscious of her situation. A bed was before her and she sank on it.

Mrs. Nelly's obsequious lamentations filled her ears, and gradually produced recollection. She raised herself, looked around, recognised the kneeling attendant, and in the person of the woman by her side, the bearer of the first letter from her father. With a shriek she swooned again.

After this, her mind had dim glimpses of alternate consciousness and insensibility. When at length, in consequence of generous restoratives, she could take a renewed and steady glance around, the shades of evening were in her chamber. Deep in their gloom sat the strange woman, silent and motionless, the hood of her dark cloak drawn over her features. Mrs. Nelly was no longer visible.

"Impostor! deceitful creature! leave me!" were the first words which, in a return of sickening sensations, Eliza uttered.

"How am I an impostor?" asked the female in a half contemptuous voice.

"How! knew you not the pretended letter you brought me was a forgery?"

"I knew, and I *know*, it was *not* a forgery!"

"And knew you not that my father,—oh, merciful Heaven! leave me.—I can speak no farther with you."

"You *must* speak farther with me. I guess what you would utter. You would tell me, that upon the night of your escape from the inn, I conducted you to another impostor, and not to your father."

Eliza, hiding her face, only groaned her answer.

"Again you would err in telling me so. Upon that little bridge, your father indeed met you. Here, in this house, this night, he will himself confirm my story!"

"Gracious God! can I believe you? why should you deceive me again? What do you mean?—my father alive, coming hither to-night! How can that be? oh, how, indeed!—cruel, torturing woman! Is not the fact of his death well known to the world since that very night?"

"Well, believed by the world; yet he lives. A friendly hand, allowing his enemies to deem him led to his fate, saved her father for Eliza Hartley."

"Ay! so your letter said. But who saved him?"

"In order to be left uncontrolled arbiter of his life or death—indeed, almost to cause himself to be appointed Sir Thomas's executioner—that friend assumed the utmost appearance of party zeal and bigotry against your father, excluded his witnesses, denied yourself access to his dungeon, was accordingly appointed superintendent of the execution. Thus, with the assistance of one trusty follower, in the depth of night and while the guards stood at a distance, another condemned rebel mounted the ladder of the gallows upon which your parent was doomed to suffer, and upon which, as you say, it is believed, he has suffered."

At parts of this statement Eliza started repeatedly. "What!" she cried, in a tone of bitter mockery, "excluded witnesses—denied me access! Who did this! Who dare you assert did it?"

"Dare? Use no such words to me, girl! Henry Talbot was that friend."

"Wretch! false wretch!" laughed Eliza hysterically—"I guessed your hero. Ay, this is following up the insidious views of your forged letter. Heaping Lie upon Lie!"

"Peace!" in turn cried her companion, rising, and using a tone different from her former subdued one, at which Eliza again started: "Peace, I say! and have a care how you insult me, Eliza Hartley. Look better at me, first." She dropped her cloak. Her dress, though crushed and carelessly adjusted, was that of a lady. Folds of black crape, half covering the rich silk of her robe, told that she had recently lost some relative. Her face was emaciated and pale as death, and her black locks, uncurled, and indeed wholly uncared, hung thickly by each cheek—"Do you not remember me, Eliza?" she continued, advancing to the bed, stooping over Eliza till their eyes met, and now speaking in a cadence of heart-broken and despairing wretchedness.

Eliza half-breathed the name suggested by the air and manner of her visitor, more than by the faded and altered features upon which she gazed.

"Yes," said Belinda St. John, "you look upon all that suffering and passion have left of your school-fellow. And may I not take this innocent hand, and while in my own name I assure you that your father lives, still hold it in friendship? 'Twould be a balm in spite of all!"

Eliza, overpowered, as well by thick-coming convictions, as by the sight of the miserable being before her, answered by clasping both the hands of her former friend, and bursting into tears.

"I am glad of that, Eliza; I am glad to see you weep, it will do you good. I wish I could shed tears, too; but they have not flowed since last I saw you. Yet no, I would not weep, if I could. It might soften my heart from its purpose. And I have that to do, and soon, which was never done with a weeping eye. The heart must be stern and stony, the eye must be dry and hot, else would the hand fail."

"Belinda!—oh, my poor Belinda!"—Eliza was again obliged to pause, giving way to a fresh burst. After some time she resumed—"I cannot say, Belinda, whether your words surprise, or delight, or terrify me most. Yes, now I believe that my beloved father can again be clasped to my heart. But—" and she stopped, shuddered, and spoke faintly—"but if so, I must believe the whole of that terrible letter—"

"Yes; when I am here to vouch it also. Did not your father promise you should receive a confirmation from my own lips?"

"Yes—no—he only said—"

"That Judkin's victim would visit you. I am that most wretched, most wronged, and yet unavenged woman!"

"And you and he had met before your coming to my father's house?" faltered Eliza, hiding her face.

"Yes: it was of him I spoke to you in your father's house. Yes; long before that we had met, although then he had not inflicted the last injury. It was to place myself in his way I came to Hartley Court, and remained in it, and, at the dead hour of night, often left it to wander about his mansion, hoping to meet him by chance. I feared that, hearing of my visit to you, he but feigned absence from home, and in this manner I expected to confront and confound him. But I truly ascertained that he was in Waterford, on business. Upon the very night when I received my intelligence, thither I went, and—you have read your father's letter—we met at last.

"Eliza, by the written communication soliciting advice upon the wavering state of your childish heart, I at first learned the treachery of our common deceiver. I will own that, while brooding over,

without attempting to answer it, my blood boiled against you, and my passion urged some dreadful punishment for the siren who had robbed me of happiness—of hope. Yet do not now shrink from me. It was but the dark impulse of a moment, soon forgotten in recollections of your unconsciousness of injury, and of our early and sweet friendship. Nay, in pity for you, left at the mercy of a man so merciless. And believe me, Eliza Hartley. Through all I have since suffered and done, the sense of my own maddening injuries scarce weighed with me more than did an ardent desire for your preservation. Let that truth become fixed in your mind—in your heart. I strongly wish you to feel convinced of the service I have rendered you. This is the last time we can ever converse together. The hour is at hand which may end my life, while it rights my wrongs—I do not think I can outlive it—I do not think I ought; and I hope to part from you as friends should part. For, after all, it is a wretched, a desolate fate to plunge into the grave without one eye left behind to shed a tear upon it. Tell me, therefore, in your soft voice, and hold my hand while you tell it, that when looking down upon my wreck, you will compassionate, and feel grateful to, the hopeless Belinda St. John. To her, who in working out her own black doom, saved her friend from despair and pollution."

Eliza, again deeply affected, replied to this appeal in such a manner as gave evident relief to the unhappy woman. "Oh! Belinda," she continued—"why was I not made acquainted with the name of your undoer at the time, when, in consequence of such information, the greater portion of what we have both since suffered might have been prevented?"

"You mean, when I saw you at Hartley Court? I will candidly answer your question. Fallacious hope and my strong pride suggested that, although diverted from his former views by passing admiration of your sparkling charms, he might still be won back by endearment, or else by determined remonstrance, at least to do me the poor justice I claimed at his hands. To become my protector—my husband—the—the"—Belinda's voice sank into a grating whisper—"the legal father of my unborn infant. Calculating upon this result, I felt the necessity, for all our sakes, of avoiding to expose him, to humiliate myself, and to sow discord between Eliza Hartley and her earliest friend. For even you, Eliza, ought not to have been made capable of recognising, in the husband of Belinda St. John, the man who, to your smiles, sacrificed—no matter for how short an interval of forgetfulness, *her* smiles and her sole earthly hopes of felicity. Or, supposing you put in possession of the fact,

and supposing him returned to his feelings for me, it would thenceforward be impossible that you and I could ever meet, even as common acquaintances. No; pride and prudence equally ensured my silence at the time you speak of. I went to the utmost limit of the lengths I should have gone, in vaguely alluding to my recent disappointments, and in repeatedly warning you to remain faithful to the first inclinations of your heart. And now, Eliza, I must in turn say, that if you had but profited by my warning, then, indeed, much had been spared to us both. Much to your father, and much to the true-hearted lover whom—before your meeting with the murderer of my mother and my baby—you had led to reckon upon your favour, and with whom you, my friend, may yet be happy. But for me there is not a hope on earth but—first—quick and fierce revenge—and then the repose of the long sleep."

In these last words there was much to startle Eliza from her hitherto single and entire reliance upon all Belinda's assertions. The notion of regarding Talbot in a favourable light had not occurred to her, even while she irresistibly yielded full credit to her gloomy visitor,—although, could she have paused to reason, conclusions of his honesty and worthiness ought to have gone hand-in-hand with that trusting state of mind. Now it suddenly occurred as strange and questionable that Belinda should so positively become his advocate; and the rapid doubt soon assumed a more distinct shape—"What! could he and Belinda be in league together? he, to secure his views upon herself—she yet to secure the homage of Sir William Judkin?—Could the excited passions of both have led them to combine in a story of Sir William's baseness, which, if credited by her, might, assisted by those favourable representations of Talbot, ensure their common hopes?" Again, again came the blessed thought, that Sir William was guiltless of all but a transfer of his love from a woman whose vehement and wild character, when once known, it seemed but natural he should dislike! Her father's death, too! Could Eliza credit the wild tale of its having been prevented? He came not!—night deepened, and he came not. If free to visit her, as was pretended, would her anxious parent dally so long? Then, what indeed was Sir William's present fate? Here appeared a discrepancy in Belinda's aroused feelings towards him, compared with some of her former assertions.

"You told me, Belinda," said Eliza, suddenly looking up, and boldly meeting her glance—"you told me, upon the night I accompanied you to meet my father, that you returned into Enniscorthy to free Sir William also from prison?"

"Yes. And I did free him."

"Why? If your only present views towards him are those of vengeance, why need you, why should you have done so? He was in the hands of those who, upon your evidence, well supported, would have punished him as he merited."

"I know not what means your changed manner, Eliza.—Is it necessary that I should answer you?—that I should repeat the nature of the oath I swore, anew, with my dying mother, over the disfigured corpse of my child? Talbot thought as you think, and urged me to leave him to the laws of the land. But while I seemed to comply, I snatched him from their probable sentence, to dispose him for my own doom and punishment. At the moment of his deliverance, he again sought to become my murderer, and breaking from me, and from the lure which I hoped would keep him by my side, at least for a short distance, avoided the hands which lay in wait to compel him to my will."

"Have you seen him since, Belinda?"

"I have. And at the moment he was about to perpetrate another murder, which *you* would have lived to weep for. And a second time I hoped to make him my manacled captive, and a second time he escaped me."

"Belinda, all this may be true;—hear me! Do not be surprised at the first show of a vehemence akin to your own. You say that your friend has saved my father; if so, was it not from a fate which he first took the basest or the most unaccountable measures to ensure? Had Talbot permitted the witnesses to appear upon my father's trial—"

"The witnesses!" interrupted Belinda, scoffingly. "Girl—child! —for child your words still prove you—if upon that day an angel had come down to arraign the perjury brought against your father, his judges *might* have been moved;—no other testimony would have moved them. This Talbot knew, as indeed any one of observation must have known. So that while his refusal to admit Sir Thomas's servants had no influence upon the result of the trial, the ostentatious zeal with which he repulsed them had much influence in inducing the order which left the execution of his friend in his own hands."

"He knew that Nale was a perjurer—knew it from the man himself—Why not step forward and declare so?"

"Spare me, Eliza Hartley, spare an unhappy woman doomed to ignominy and wretchedness in every connexion of life! Yet I will still answer you. In not attempting this, Talbot was governed by

more than one motive. When he learned, secretly as it had been arranged, that you were indeed to become the nominal wife of the blackest-hearted man that ever wore a beautiful form, your old friend could only meet the exigency, by acting on Nale's depositions and Whaley's warrant. Afterwards, it appeared but a chance that his accusation of my miserable parent would be effective. And in that case, Talbot himself becoming an object of suspicion, your father was really lost to you. And, Eliza, respect Talbot for an additional motive—that is, if you have any generous feeling left. He was willing to screen, at my kneeling request, the degraded being to whom I owe my accursed existence!"

Eliza, spite of the taunts of her unhappy friend, yet clung to the hopes that Sir William Judkin would somehow clear himself of charges so black that her girlish mind shrank from contemplating them. She could not believe him guilty, could not realize that his own crimes had built a barrier between him and her. The black brow of Belinda St. John told that she read her thoughts.

"Sir William yet lives?" asked Eliza, suddenly awaking from the reverie into which she had fallen.

"He does—but neither for you nor for me."

"Saved, then, from his perilous situation in the streets of Ross?"

"Ay, saved!"

"Thank God!" Eliza cried, as she sprang up.

"And you dare to doubt the truth of what I have told you?"

"I do!" answered Eliza, carried away by her sudden energy, never before assumed in Belinda's presence—"I do! Nothing but his own admissions, or a repetition of your charges to his face, and his tacit acquiesence under them, shall make me discard my doubt."

"Come, then!" cried Belinda, exhibiting to excess the impetuosity that in her father's house had terrified Eliza,—"Come then, and you shall have the proof you demand. I did not intend to expose you to a scene that must harrow your puny nature, perhaps kill you—a scene, that I alone, of all woman-kind, have nerve—because I have cause, to encounter! But I see that to vindicate myself, and ensure your future quiet—if, as I premised, you survive it—it is now necessary you should listen, ay, and look on. Follow me,—dare you follow?"

"Whither would you lead me?" demanded Eliza, impressively but resolutely.

"Into the presence of Sir William Judkin."

"Swear to that!"

"I swear it by Him who is to judge me for all I shall do, by all that has been done upon me!"

"Lead the way, then!" In something like her own frenzy of manner, Eliza trod in the quick steps of Belinda.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A PERSON startled out of sleep, will suddenly rush to grapple, as it were, with the uncomprehended sound that has scared away his slumbers, his limbs and body vehemently active, while his mind is yet incapable of watching their motions. There are perfectly waking moments, too, though not often encountered in life, when urged by overpowering excitement, we yield to an undefined, wild impulse, as little understood as that of the half-aroused sleeper, and hurry to grasp at some vague object, with all the ardour of unreasoning desire. Under such an impetus, Eliza followed what, if she had reasoned, ought to have appeared to her, the very doubtful guidance of Belinda St. John. Prompt as was her action, she could not, indeed, have accounted satisfactorily for it. Her continued doubts did not really arise from close consideration of the case before her. She wished to doubt, rather than doubted. Were her heart analyzed at the instant, a desperate resolution to attain the certainty which must go near to destroy her, and not a buoyant hope of any contrary demonstration, would have been found to inspire her, as she hastened to see realized her conductor's promise of an immediate interview with Sir William Judkin.

They descended to the hall.

"This lady returns shortly," said Belinda, quickly, to Mistress Nelly and Robert, who, notwithstanding their continued civilities, seemed disposed to refuse egress. But to this brief explanation, if so it might be called, they bowed and curtsied anew, and allowed both the ladies to pass out instantly.

Eliza and Belinda gained the avenue, side by side, walking quickly over the dancing patches of white light which the moon shed through the interstices of the trees and of their foliage. They passed the outward gate, and Belinda advanced swiftly towards the ruins of Dunbrody Abbey, which, on its gentle elevation, not

far distant, was partly silvered by the unclouded luminary, partly wrapped in impenetrable shadow, while a vivid inversion of the whole effect appeared in the broad, smooth water beneath.

Suddenly, a chilling fancy seized upon Eliza. The mysterious view of the ruin, the scenery of its crumbled walls and nameless graves, became connected with Belinda's wild and dark character, and with the thought of probable injury intended to herself. She had before now suspected her wretched companion to be of unsound mind. Nay, allowing her claims to sanity, Eliza could not infer from their late conversation, that Belinda, all her uncurbed passions and vehemence brought into account, might mean her well. And just in such a place, and at such an hour, either madness or hatred might easily and fitly indulge its promptings. Arrested by these imaginings, she abruptly stood still.

"Do you falter in your resolution?" questioned Belinda, at her side, after having for a moment closely regarded her.

"Whither would you guide me, Belinda?" Eliza asked, her tones betraying the alarm she felt.

"To yonder ruins."

"Why?—Did you not say we were to meet Sir William Judkin?" the girl cried, shrinking back.

"And there you are to meet him."

"In that frightful place?"

"Yes—it is the fittest for the interview."

"I cannot go with you, Belinda! I will rather return to the house I have left, and under its roof await, as best I may, what is to come."

"It is not now a matter of choice with you," Belinda cried, with an impatient stamp of her foot.—Your wavering—your childishness leaves me no patience! After what has occurred, your petty terrors are not to be considered. You must come with me, Eliza."

"Must! My God! for what purpose?"

"For your own—For the indulgence of a wish you have yourself expressed.—Hasten, the time presses."

"You would not force me, Belinda?"

"I *would* not; yet *must*, if 'tis necessary: as I have said, I did not intend to expose you to the scene you are doomed to witness. But you defied, dared me, insulted, and doubted me! Long, long ago, I cautioned you against all the consequences of your indulging a wayward fancy. You laughed at my counsel, and braved them all, like a self-willed girl.—Face one of them now like a woman."

"Pity me, Belinda—allow me to return to the house!"

"Pity?—what is pity? I, at least, never found the quality in my kind, and therefore could not acquire it for myself. At all events, 'tis a weakly feeling, unsuited to this occasion. Come! we are to be avenged together! you shall see or partly see, the striking of the blow. I will seat you on a grave, and you and the viewless dead, if such there be, must answer to God and man that Belinda kept her oath. Onward and judge for yourself!" And her slight fingers pressed with an iron grasp upon the girl's shrinking shoulder.

"Help! help!" screamed Eliza, breaking from her, and flying precipitately. But Belinda pursued, and soon seized her.

"Do not thwart me!" she cried in a deep startling tone. "Hitherto I have dealt magnanimously by you. Your insidious blandishments seduced, and made a villain of the man who was god-like when I first met him, and my worshipper, as I was his. To you, fickle girl, I owe it that he, for whose lightest pleasure I would have poured out my heart's-blood, raised his hand against my life, and" the woman added with a gasp, "killed my baby, while it quickened beneath my bosom. To you I owe it that, to-night, I am motherless, childless, friendless, houseless—my cheeks withered and hollow, and my heart a rock. To you I owe all this, and more than this. Yet, to the present hour I have respected our schoolgirl friendship! To the present hour I have curbed the jealous rage that often boiled to strike you to my feet. With every cause that woman can have for detestation, I have shown myself your friend. But outrage me no farther, I warn you: in the present hour of trial, cross me not. Else I may forget our young and innocent days—forget that you are Eliza Hartley!"

"If you mean me kindly," said Eliza, imploringly, "of what use can my presence be, in the coming depths of night, in yonder dreadful place?"

"If I mean you kindly? Do you still doubt me? See—if I wished to do you evil, I could do it where we stand—see—I am prepared for all deadly purposes." The moonbeam indeed glittered on a blade which she snatched from her bosom! "But no." she put it up, in a calmer mood, or at least while she spoke in a calmer accent; "this steel is differently destined. Onward, girl, and fear not."

She flung her emaciated arm, which desperation seemed to have nerved to masculine strength, around Eliza's shrinking form, and hurried her along.

Eliza really feared to give farther opposition: her guide had

threatened her in no very doubtful words. Shuddering and almost fainting, she allowed Belinda to direct her steps. The avenue of Talbot's house entered upon the high road, and along this they for some distance held their course. Then they came to a rude bridge constructed over one of those deep and abrupt hollows, locally called *pils*, up which, at high water, the tide flows in-land, in a body so considerable as to float boats of burden, while at the sea's ebb, its loamy banks inclose but a shallow rill. They crossed the insecure bridge, and after some continued progress, gained the green ascent upon which stood the lonely and extensive ruins of Dunbrody.

Since their last conversation, no word had been spoken. Still both remained silent. Eliza observed that Belinda did not strike pward, so as directly to approach the decayed monastery, but obliquely and gradually ascended the little elevation, keeping rather near to the water. After some rapid walking, she stopped suddenly, and gazed around her, muttering, "Not here! 'tis not quite the hour yet;" and again strode forward.

While they had stood still, Eliza sent around a look of timid inquiry. To her left, and higher up, were the masses of ruins. A mitred square castle was their centre, white in the moonshine, which also streamed here and there beneath the pointed arches of the roofless aisles; the broad shade, that at a greater distance presented only blanks of darkness, now allowed the eye to catch projecting forms, or blind recesses, or shapes still more vague, which sometimes seemed to move and wave beneath her unsteady glance, as if the spirits of the ancient masters of the pile were lurking within the fragments of its walls. But it was not in expectation of supernatural visitants that Eliza peered into the mysteries of the old building. Of such as she did expect to see, none met her eye.

She looked forth upon the prospect to her right. The moon was reflected in the still sheet of water beneath the height, and gentle swells, silvered and sparkling, came at intervals to break, scarce with a sound, at its feet. At one bank, a wooded height very distant, rose above the river; at the other swept downwards a point of land, round which the waters curved. Still no human figure met her view. The soft murmur of the approaching tide was soothing, not terrific; and the whole scene was as beautiful as lonely.

But her conductor hurried her on to a spot even more lonely.

At the usual full tide, the eminence of Dunbrody was almost encompassed by water. In one direction round its base, the *pil*, before-mentioned, became the channel of the intruding element; in another, a stretch of flat land lay under inundation. When the

tide ebbed, this last was a swamp, across which, in former times, the industrious monks of the monastery had constructed a causeway, though few traces of the work appear to have triumphed over the undermining floods of many generations. But the high Gothic archway, to which it led, in an outward wall of the building, yet exists; and contiguous to this relic, remote from the main pile, and overlooking the swamp, stood, upon the night of Eliza Hartley's visit to the spot, a little solitary ruin, not more than eight paces in length, and half the number in breadth. Rudely fashioned swellings of the turf, each the tenement of the humble dead of the district, crowded all around it. Humble, indeed, must have been the sleepers beneath; for no "storied urn" or graceful monument arose to record their former state, and to mock their unconscious ashes; not even a rudely-chiselled stone bore their names. The sole mementoes that appeared were time-bleached fragments, taken from the adjacent ruin, and placed at the head of some little mounds, that, by their recollected peculiarity of shape, the relations of the last-buried might know whither to convey a new comer, to mingle his dust with the kindred dust below. Nay, even these rude remembrances were very few; and the numerous carelessly-formed graves crowded together in undulating and mingling confusion.

Within the crumbled walls that stood in the midst of this heap of dead, the passing foot kicked up, at every step, from amongst the fallen stones, a human relic—so closely had they been piled over each other. The noisome hemlock, the prickly nettle, and the other tall and rank weeds that thrive on the cemetery's fat soil, mingled with the long grass that also flourishes in its nourishment. Two old ash-trees near at hand, and some chance-sown black-thorns, shaded this favourite place of sepulture. Alder trees, believed by the Irish peasantry to be descendants of that upon which the traitor, Judas Iscariot, hanged himself in despair, gained within and without, a luxuriant growth, and further darkened the solitary spot with their loathsome-smelling foliage. One of them, indeed, once rooted in the end wall farthest from the entrance, had grown in time to such an unwieldly bulk, as to fall across the space enclosed by the little ruin, dragging along with it the stones between which it had insidiously wrought its fibres. There still lay the trunk of the spoliator, amid the rubbish it had made. All around the remaining portions of the interior, bushes and creeping brambles ran wild. While the ruin-loving ivy, that almost seems designed to exhibit the evergreen of inferior nature in contrast with the decay of man's idle works, and even with that of his perishable body, came from the

outside over the top of the unroofed walls, hanging in festoons above the mingled relics of human labour and of human beings.

Stumbling amid the various inequalities of the ground, Belinda St. John and Eliza Hartley entered this little silent place of death and desolation. Often would Eliza have shrunk back, but her stern guide still controlled her motions.

"Sit down there," said she,—"you tremble and need rest." And she pointed to the fallen trunk of the alder-tree.

"Why force me to this frightful spot?" inquired Eliza.

Belinda stood in the centre of the ruin, the moon shone upon her emaciated and ashy face, glistened over the coal-black hair that hung thickly adown her hollow cheeks, and touched with dimmed radiance the folds of her mourning dress. Thus standing, elavated to her full height, she seemed a figure in keeping with the wreck around her.

"I have brought—forced you here," she answered, "that you may have your request, and that I may keep my promise. For here—ay, in this very church-yard,—you are to meet him who has played traitor to us both, and whom you will hear admit as much before the moon goes down."

She stepped aside as she uttered these words. The ray of moonlight she had intercepted flowed forward and fell in a white shower into the far corner of the ruin. She started, fixed her eyes upon it, pointed impressively to it, and resumed.

"Look there; that is supernatural! It lights up the very spot where rest two of his victims—my broken-hearted mother and my little murdered innocent. Upon a dark night, my father brought a small boat along the river below: for cargo he had two corpses in their coffins. Hither he bore them, and rooted among the stones to make them the only grave the place would allow. Some days after, as I am told, a few children playing amongst the graves, saw the end of a new coffin that had been but partially covered with the rubbish, and ran away in terror. But it was my request that the coffins should not be hidden deep. I anticipated this night, when I might be able to point out the names on the lids. And now I will prepare for his coming." Proceeding to the corner she bent down, the moonlight falling upon her stooped figure, as she hastily rooted away the stones.

"Belinda," said Eliza, addressing her in tremulous accents, while she was thus occupied,—"Belinda, you have solemnly promised more than once, that this night I shall embrace my father."

"And I promise it again. Had you treated all my promises and

assertions so as to permit of my leaving you in the house, perhaps by this time you had been in his arms. Now it is not unlikely that he will come to seek you here.—But, hark!"

A loud shout from abroad broke the calm silence of the night. Belinda sprang up, strode to the narrow entrance, and clapping her hands together, gave an answering scream. The daws startled in the neighbouring ruin were heard clamorously croaking their alarm at the unusual and piercing sound. As it echoed along the water, the stalking heron of the swamp responded in a harsh cry. Belinda hastily returned into the little building.

"'Tis he!" she whispered.

"Who? my father?"

"No; the man you first wished to meet. They bear him hither."

She pointed her finger at the shivering Eliza, and slowly moving it up and down, continued to address her.

"And now attend—listen with all your soul before you interrupt us."

Steps and voices were heard approaching—They came nearer. Belinda drew back into the shade, and two men entered, bearing the seemingly lifeless body of a third person.

"Lay him there," said Belinda, speaking from her concealment, as she motioned towards the corner in which she had lately been occupied.

"He's upon the hand-gallop for a sthrange country,—goin' to lave Ireland for a while;" said Bill Nale, as he and Shawn-a-Gow rudely flung down the body into the nook, where it lay partially in the moonshine.

"Dying, you mean?" eagerly questioned Belinda of her wretched father, while she pressed forward. "Why is this?"

"None of our fault. The wounds he got in the battle done his business. Hurry wid him, or he won't wait for you."

"Leave us together," said Belinda. Her ruffian parent moved to quit the ruin.

The moment they had begun to speak, Shawn-a-Gow abruptly addressed Eliza by name, and thrusting a crumpled paper into her hand, while his eyes glared watchfully towards Nale, whispered. "The moolight is sthrong enough, Miss Hartley, to let you run an eye over it, jest to tell me what it manes—I can't make out pin-writin' myself, bud I know my own name when it's put down on paper, an' I think I saw it there. Hurry, Miss—I wouldn't ax you, [illegible]ere's life an' death in the business."

Thus appealed to, Eliza, notwithstanding the imminent interest of her own situation, read sufficient to allow her to answer—"Yes, your name is written here. It seems a letter from some one who expected to find pikes at your house—take it—" turning away her head, and once more fixing her eyes on the corner, where the wounded man still lay motionless, while Belinda and her father continued their short dialogue.

"Look at the name at the bottom of it," resumed Shawn, in a deep whisper—"Isn't it the name o' Whaley?"—

"Yes—leave me."

"An' isn't this name on the cover, William Nale, Miss?"

"It is, it is—pray disturb me no farther."

"I guessed as much," said the smith, talking to himself. Nale now made way out of the ruin, and he strode after him.

"There, Shawn, said his companion, when they had cleared the the heap of graves abroad and descending towards the wooden bridge that crossed the *pil*,—"There, he's brought to his long reckonin' at last."

"So he is," replied Shawn. "An' so it happens wid all decavers like him, sooner or later—Don't you think so, Bill?"

"Yes, to be sure, Jack. What the Duoul ails him?" he added in a mutter, as he increased his speed down the eminence.

"Stop!" cried Shawn, seizing him by the shoulder, and standing still himself, he held Nale at arm's length with one hand.

"Are you takin' lave o' your senses, Jack Delouchery? Don't you know this is no place for stoppin' when we have to—"

"Don't spake either, only to what I'll ax you," interrupted his captor. "I found this afther you, on the road, this evenin'—what is it?"

"What is it?—why a letther, to be sure." Nale knew that the smith could not decipher writing, and he therefore deemed himself not in much danger.

"I see it's a letther—Who wrote it?"

"Who wrote, it?—My poor crature of a daughter, Jack—She wrote it, an' on the head o' this very business too."

"That's a lie!" thundered the Gow, grasping him round the neck with both hands. Nale instantly lost the power of uttering a sound. Almost instinctively he groped in his bosom.

"It won't do!" again roared Shawn, detecting this movement. He took away one of his hands from the ruffian's throat, and made himself master of the pistol for which Nale had been searching.

"I'll build up your house for you," gasped the half-choaked Nale, in this momentary respite, "I'll—"

"An' you daare to be spakin'!" once more interrupted his executioner, as he dashed him against the ground. Instantly Shawn's knee was on his breast, his left-hand still grasping his neck, and his right presenting the pistol. The smith had pressed the muzzle to Nale's forehead, and his finger vibrated on the trigger. He checked himself.

"No, you're not desarvin' o' the shot"—he muttered, turning the weapon in his hand—"this way 'ill pay you betther." He raised the pistol, intending to strike Nale on the head with its heavy but. Again, however, he controlled himself, and hurled it far into the water beneath—"What am I dhramin' about?" he resumed, "it ought to be done no way but this." Raising the knee which had already crushed Nale's breast-bone, while he continued to kneel on the other, Shawn dragged up his writhing victim, and placing the back of his neck upon the tightened joint, a second time used both his hands.

"Tom, my boy, can you see us?" were the last words John Delouchery uttered over the object of his vengeance, while his savage eyes gloated over the upturned face. In the morning, Nale's crippled corpse was found, not far from the *pil*. The smith might easily have hurled it into the deep gully which, about the time he had completed his act, was filled by the tide. But it seemed that he scorned to take any measures to hide what he had done.

We return to the ruin.

For about the space of time occupied by this scene, Belinda had remained stationary and silent over Sir William Judkin. Eliza, not yet assured that it was the Baronet, sat terrified and trembling on the trunk of the alder-tree. Belinda's voice, sounding as if she muttered to herself, at length reached her ear.

"Yes.—I had him brought here to kill him. But not as he now lies at my feet! Not wounded, fainting, and already half-dead. I expected to see him struggle against my uplifted hand: he cannot even speak a word to avert the blow."

Her hollow accents, however, seemed to have recalled Sir William to some sense of his situation, for he stirred slightly, and in a ble, broken tone, said—

Where am I? Into what savage hands have I fallen? Is e no kind fellow-creature within call?"

liza knew his voice at once, changed as it was, and forgetting

every thing in a sudden access of pity, started up with clasped hands, and was rushing to his side.

"Back, girl!" cried Belinda, seizing her arm, and fiercely swinging her back—"Yet, no; take his hand, if you can—'Twill recall my resolution," she muttered, "take his hand, Eliza Hartley."

"Eliza Hartley!" gasped the dying man, "where is she?"

"I am close by you, William," answered Eliza.

"Do I indeed touch your innocent hand? Do I look at length upon your sweet face?"

A deep breath escaped from between Belinda's teeth.

"How came we into this place, my Eliza? Is not it amongst the dead they have flung my shattered body? I think my head rests on a coffin—yes, and here I am brought to die—already I feel the pang at my heart.—Eliza, hearken to me—You have escaped a wretch—at least—" he continued, his mind wavering—"at least I thought so, though lately she appeared before me. But it must have been fancy—for her head was cleft, ay, and the deep water rolled over her." With a cry of horror Eliza dropped his hand—"Ah! now I am left alone, now you forsake me, Eliza, but had I lived, you would have proved my saving angel. For your gentle sake even I would have learned to love goodness. Belinda made me what I am—Her fiery passion, her evil nature could neither reclaim nor attach me—"

"Rise, Eliza Hartley, or share his fate!" cried Belinda, stepping into the moon's ray, so that it fully illuminated her features.

Sir William ceased speaking, his eye glazed, yet fixed itself on hers. He strove to rise upon his elbow, while they regarded each other, but the attempt failed, only causing a cry of agony.

"Ay," said Belinda, "you are among the graves! Ay! your head rests upon a coffin."

"And you!" he said; "you rise from the bottom of the deep river to meet me here!"

"No; I escaped your hand. I live to meet you here."

"Then," hegasped, "wretch as I am! I thank a merciful God for that!—I am not in reality a murderer!"

"You are, although Belinda St. John lives. Remember your brother-assassin, Brown."

He uttered a shuddering cry.

"And turn, if you can, one look upon the little coffin that supports your head. Your murderous blows killed its inmate, ere yet the babe saw the light of day."

He endeavoured to obey the command. It seemed even as though

he vaguely comprehended the name upon the lid. For after gazing upon it, he attempted to join his hands and raise his eyes, as though to pray. Then sinking under the effort, his chest and face came with a heavy sound against the coffin, and his spread arms hung at its sides.

"And now you begin to know why you are brought here," continued Belinda. "I swore over that infant's corpse, hand-in-hand with my gasping mother, who stretches by its side, to kill you where you lie—See!" She drew out the long blade that Eliza had before seen in her hand.

"Hold, Belinda! do not make yourself a murderess!" shrieked Eliza, flinging herself once more by Sir William.

"Touch him not, siren! brave me not! Rise up and hearken to me! you and he together!"

"Ah!" Eliza shrieked again, "he cannot hearken to more!—He is dead!—dead since he fell upon the coffin!"

"Dead?" repeated Belinda—"dead, you say?" She knelt, put back his hair, and looked into his rigid features. "Ay, so he is; dead, and as lowly laid as his poor victims. He was a bad and wretched man, Eliza, but beautiful as Lucifer. I am glad it happens thus. Had he come before me in all his vigorous strength, I think I could have kept my oath. But from the moment I saw his crushed and wounded body, and heard his low wailing voice, revenge left my heart. And when you cried out just now, I did not draw the steel to strike it through him, Eliza, but only that he might see proof of my former purpose. Well, he is gone—he, whom we both loved. He has left one of us destroyed and avenged, and the other saved and warned. God be more merciful to him than we were to each other! He now stands for judgment, with you, my little baby, as his accuser," the poor girl went on, laying one hand on the infant's coffin, while the other passed round the neck of the yet warm corpse—her voice, as it sank to plaintiveness, recovering somewhat of its girlish music. "But do not, do not plead loudly against your wretched father! Even for my sake, my babe, kneel at his feet, and hold up your angel hands for him to the Great Judge. I think he has bribed your advocacy, after all. Eliza, did he not seem to die praying over the relics of his child? And when his arms fell helplessly down, perhaps"—Belinda's changed voice broke and trembled—"perhaps he would have embraced the innocent clay. Nay, what is this? The night-dew, or his tears, upon the lid? Oh, God! oh, God! and did he weep for us at last, my infant?" The unhappy woman found way for

her own tears—the first shed since her idol had forsaken her. Pressing closer the arm that encircled the dead man's neck, she flung the other round the coffin, and fell convulsed upon it.

Eliza's anguish was also excessive. It was only checked by some one pronouncing her name outside the ruin. She sprang up, a man entered the little doorway, and she sank into her father's arms.

Recovering from the swoon that succeeded to her long struggling with terror, at last ended in joy, she found herself still supported by her father at the bottom of the eminence of Dunbrody.

"Yes, yes!—now I am not left in doubt!" she cried, gazing into his features—"You are indeed safe from future danger, my dearest father."

"Safe as my letter promised you."

"Harry Talbot, then——"

"*Is* our common deliverer.

Eliza glanced around. Her father, understanding her look, resumed—

"But he presumes nothing upon his services. Therefore I am here alone."

The good-feeling shown by Talbot, in this instance, appealed to Eliza as much as did the sense of his extraodinary conduct.

"The wretched Belinda St. John!" she whispered after a pause, pointing towards the little ruin.

"An aged clergyman, a relation of her unhappy mother, whom we interested on her account, followed me to that horrible place, and is now at her side. Be tranquil, Eliza, she shall be taken care of—Come, my darling, let us no longer stay in this sad place."

The storm of insurrection blew away: not so its affects. The people saw their error, and politicians hastened to grasp the advantages which that error placed under their hands. Blood continued to be shed some time after the total discomfiture of the peasant-force, but at last its flow was allowed to cease. In the pause of terror, with a show of conciliation, and a promise of advantages which have not yet been conceded, the Legislative Union,—that measure for which disaffection had been permitted to break out into actual disloyalty, nay, had often been goaded to the field,—the Legislative Union between England and Ireland was accomplished.

We have to record another union, which proved happier than the

national one. In the year 1800 Eliza Hartley became the bride of Henry Talbot: not till then could she tutor her heart to return to her early affection for her first lover. But at twenty years of age she was better qualified than at eighteen she had been to discriminate between a passion founded on little else than the personal attractions of its oject, and a more sincere tenderness, bestowed as the reward of high principle, and of manly honour and courage. Though, after all, Talbot's face and figure were only second to those of the unfortunate Baronet, his rival.

Of Belinda, from the night of Sir William's death, her old school-fellow never heard. It was only known, or rather suspected, that the aged clergyman immediately conveyed her to a foreign country, were, perhaps in the seclusion of a convent, she learned to triumph at once over her passions and her sorrows. The mystery of her fate became impenetrable, from the circumstance of the sudden death of her old protector on the Continent, during his return, alone, to his own country.

Shawn-a-Gow fell in one of the unsuccessful battles afterwards fought by the insurgents.

His daughter Kitty, and Timothy Reily became joint proprietors of a snug farm-house on the estate of Harry Talbot. Under its roof both sought to give quiet and peace to the poor maniac mother, who had witnessed the cruel death of her son.

As for Nanny the Knitter, she lived long to recount to wondering ears her adventures under the lime-tree and in the chest, and to knit dozens of pairs of little stockings, for five or six pairs of little feet appertaining to the persons of as many curly-headed prattlers, all bearing the name of Talbot. Moreover, the population of her county had been thinned during the insurrection, and a consequent necessity arising for reparing the want, Nanny became very brisk, during many subsequent years, in the service of Hymen.

Father Rourke was hanged upon the bridge of Wexford; the weight of his colossal body having broken the rope, however, before Saunders Smyly saw him pending to his heart's content.

THE END.

NOTES TO THE CROPPY.

Note, page 59, Chap. 6.

I could learn from those who spoke of the year 1798 from personal remembrance, that the yeomanry Corps of my native City, at that period, and their successors, existing within my own memory, were almost prototypes. This being the case, a brief notice of the latter will give a fair idea of the former, and will not be inappropriate as a note.

During the fourteen years succeeding the suppression of the 1798 rebellion, the untried valour of the armed citizens of Kilkenny had collapsed—the martial equipments worn in the time of peril had become mementoes, and the citizen-soldiers had resumed their every-day bloodless occupations. Suddenly and unexpectedly the outbreak of 1803, organized and led on by the hapless enthusiast, Robert Emmett, created a necessity for the re-embodiment of the yeomanry.

When I say that a necessity arose for re-arming the citizens, it was not understood by themselves, at least, that they were marshalled for the purpose of facing an enemy in the field. The call to arms was obeyed for another and more peaceable object.

In the year 1803, it was not really apprehended by any one that the brief insurrection of a night, which did not extend beyond the streets of the metropolis, was likely to be re-enacted in the provinces. It was, however, judged, and I believe there was good reason for the presumption, that an insurgent spirit still infected the mass of the people throughout Ireland. An apprehension was either really or affectedly entertained that the disaffection of 1798 was again to be openly displayed—and so the yeomanry corps throughout the kingdom were again called together.

For the especial purpose of demonstrating their identity with the existing order of things, and of manifesting their disconnection with the enemies of the state, did the citizens of Kilkenny take the oath of allegiance, and enrol themselves as yeomen. By donning the King's scarlet, and loading themselves with the King's musket, they gave tangible and indisputable evidence of their fidelity to the Monarch and the British constitution. As to any idea of following the profession of arms, by the actual use of their fire-locks against an opposing enemy, this practical portion of the soldier's calling they, for the most part, neither contemplated or apprehended. It would have been nothing short of cruelty, to have ordered the yeomen of my day into actual service—seeing that no very brilliant achievement could be fairly calculated on from their valour, and that their chance of wearing the laurel of conquerors was more than problematical.

There were three yeomanry Corps in the city of Kilkenny when I was a boy. Why they were called yeomanry appeared strange to us younkers, inasmuch as there was not one yeoman included in the muster, according to the signification of the word given in our spelling books and dictionaries.

One of these military bodies was the "Legion." Here again, we, schoolboys, were at fault. On the authority of Roman history, a legion should number, at the least, five thousand men. On the one day of the week devoted to military duty, our "Legion" scarcely exceeded sixty men atarms. There were one hundred names, we could learn, on the muster roll. But what of that?—even so, it was an assumption to call that insignificant band a "Legion:" farther, out of the nominal hundred there were generally forty or more unable to answer the roll-call, being incapacitated to bear arms, by gout or rheumatism, or home-sickness, or other unsoldierlike malady. We, young scoffers, sneered derisively at the vanity of sixty elderly fogies inflating themselves into a "Legion."

The place of rendezvous for our "Legion" was an enclosed space surrounded by stables. Here the Legion was put into military array, and placed in marching order. No easy task this for the old disciplinarian who had been taken into pay to instruct them in the art of war. Front rank and rear rank he found to be often confounded by his inapt pupils. The left shoulder was frequently mistaken for the right, and the slanting musket of the front rank man now and again tilted off the cap of the covering file. As for teaching the goose-step to many of the "Legion," he found that to be an impracticability. My companions and myself were frequently lookers-on, to enjoy the old tactician's tantrums, while he witnessed the jostlings and scramblings, and stepping out of time and place, perpetrated by the insubordinate corps. As we beheld him stamping with both feet, and heard him swearing and bellowing, and again, hauling his soldiers about; we were of opinion, that he would have used his ratan with all his might, on the shoulders of his tormentors, if he had had his will. This was not to be thought of, however. Many of the "Legion" were farther advanced in years than the veteran himself. All were men of consideration, too—either men of wealth or other status in the city, and their shoulders should remain intact. This little characteristic of the "Legion" was fully exemplified by the calling of the roll. The unadorned proper name was never pronounced; either the prefix Mr., or the addition Esq., was invariably proclaimed, according to the social, (not military,) grade of the individual.

The usual march performed by the "Legion" was from the enclosed yard in which they had assembled, and where they had been placed in position, across a public road and into the court-yard of Kilkenny Castle. This march of two hundred yards or so was, to some of them, a sufficient day's campaigning. The greater number stepped out gallantly to be sure, but there were many, who groaned under the fardel of their muskets, and who, of necessity substituted a hobbling trot for the military pace. The fidelity of these latter to the throne and constitution could not be questioned.

It is a fact, that one member of the "Legion," Johnny M——, a comfortable woollen merchant, could not be compelled to load his firelock, lest, as he said, "he might hurt some body." And it is a fact

also, that another, a wealthy merchant, always closed both his eyes when at target practice, while he discharged his piece.

The second yeomanry Corps of my remembrance was, to use a feudal nomenclature, called Hamilton's corps. It was so named after its commander, the Rev. Captain Hamilton. Exclusive of this, the proper and acknowledged title, Hamilton's Corps was known by two other designations, each somewhat derisive, or at least derogatory: they were called "TheTombstone Rangers," and they were nicknamed also "The Highgoes."

They were the "Tombstone Rangers" because their drill-ground was the thickly tenanted church-yard of the Cathedral. Here they learned to step out in military fashion, and to practise their fire-lock exercise, graves, tombstones, and headstones meeting them whichever way they wheeled, knocking against them and breaking their ranks. Here they could not by possibility find one foot of level ground to step on, nor move one foot without encountering some mortuary obstacle. We, sneering lads, were of opinion that they were in training as "sharp-shooters," and that, when brought into action, they were to fight, each individual soldier on his own account, and not in rank. Hamilton's Corps were called "The Highgoes," because they mustered on a height overlooking the town; the Cathedral being situated on a considerable eminence. When the Corps marched into town for military inspection on review days, they had to descend a steep hill. And when returning to their place of muster, they generally, to avoid a detour, marched up a long and steep flight of steps, higgledy-piggledy, as of necessity they must—hence they were called "the Highgoes." We commentators, agreed that Hamilton's Corps would prove invaluable in the assault of a battery, the practice of marching against the steep flight of steps training them excellently for scrambling up a scaling ladder.

When Hamilton's Corps descended from their lofty parade-ground to pass through the streets of the town, the comments made on their military appearance were any thing but complimentary, and these comments were not always inaudible. We, younkers, often scoffed at the soiled state of their uniform and accoutrements; and we often laughed, too audibly to escape notice, as we beheld the Corps shouldering onward, no two of them stepping together. We were too thoughtless to bear in mind, that they were nearly all working mechanics, with little time and as little taste for furbishing. Nor did we make allowance, as we should have done, for the difficulty of acquiring military precision of movement, or military erectness of bearing, in an over-stocked grave-yard.

The Sergeant of "Hamilton's Corps" was the Clerk of the Cathedral Church; he was not much beyond five feet in height; he was a very fat little fellow, carrying a protuberant paunch before him. His face was nearly circular, and bloated, and his grey eyes protrusive. He always marched in front of his Corps, representing in his own person the advanced guard; his halberd, one of the regulation length, rising once and a half his own height above him. This little Sergeant was always puffing if he essayed to step out majestically: and Mars himself could not look more ferocious than was his wont, when he detected some juvenile wag mimicking his lofty bearing and his paunch.

Indeed for that matter, the rank and file of "the Highgoes" had little

of the jaunty air of professional soldiers about them, and no wonder. They were painfully conscious, as they proceeded on their route, of the jests and jeers that could not but reach their ears and attract their observation: and most excusably every man of them scowled from beneath knitted brows on all beyond their own body. I now acknowledge that their feelings must have been justly irritated.

This note has extended to such length, that I will take but slight notice of the third yeomanry Corps of my boyhood. It was raised by a private gentleman, who provided the clothing for his men—Captain H—— I shall call him. Captain H ——'s Corps was composed nearly altogether of working mechanics, as was the last military body placed under review; but although alike in this respect, Captain H—— commanded men of a different kidney. The greater number were suspected of being warped to the side of Croppyism—they enrolled themselves to be purged of this taint, to the eye at least. They received a shilling of the King's pay each day of review, or drill, or parade; this shilling they spent in the evening, not in drinking his Majesty's health, as I could learn, but in toasting sentiments of very doubtful loyalty—thereby verifying the adage, "In vino veritas."

The chief military exploit I could hear of as distinguishing Captain H ——'s Corps was a feat introduced by one of the members, while the liquor passed round. Those were regarded as the best soldiers of the body who could bounce into their own pantaloons while held by two of the Corps for the achievement.

The Commander, Captain H———, was an enthusiastic musician, a first-rate performer on the violin. His devotion to "sweet sounds" influenced him to appoint to the Lieutenancy of his Corps the organist of his parish church; he was of the creed of the ancients, who believed that the watchdog of the infernal regions stopped his baying at the sound of the lyre. A musician, the Captain opined, must make a good and brave yeoman, and so he appointed the organist as his Lieutenant.

Captain H———'s Corps was with others at a review, held in a field called "the triangle field," near Kilkenny. The band of a regiment of regular troops attended on the occasion, and occupied the centre of the ground. As usual at such scenes of warlike display, the order came that the assembled troops were to march in slow pace, first forward, then to the right, and then to pass close to the reviewing General, who sat on his horse as gravely as he could, although there was a certain twitching through the risible muscles of his mouth as he looked on at the manœuvres of certain of the yeomanry Corps. The band suddenly changed from the air they had been playing to a new and splendid march. Captain H——— instantly paused; he was at once riveted to the spot in entranced rapture; he placed his sword across his left arm, and used it as he was accustomed to use his fiddle bow; keeping strict time to every bar of the enchanting music; continuing to bow on, he turned his delighted face over his shoulder, and he addressed his Lieutenant, who was named "Tuite"—

"Oh! Tuite, Tuite, Tuite," he sighed. "Oh! Tuite, Tuite, Tuite."

And he was at a stand still, continuing to draw his sword backward and forward across his arm, and continuing his appeal—

"Oh! Tuite, Tuite, Tuite."

Oblivion came on him altogether of his own identity, as the Com-

mander of a gallant company—total oblivion of his military duties, oblivion of the unmusical predilection of the martinet Field-Officer looking on in surprise.

The Corps preceding that of the music-stricken Captain marched on; those following halted, as he and his had halted. There was consequently a hiatus; the marching battalions were four hundred paces away from those that should have followed; still Captain H——— continued to bow with his sword across his arm, and to sigh out—

"Oh! Tuite, Tuite, Tuite."

An Aid-de-Camp dashed across the field at full speed—

"Captain H———," he cried out, "what is the cause of this?"

The Captain started as if he had suddenly dropped to earth from the ethereal region in which he had been soaring. He looked round him confusedly, as if to ascertain the nature of the spot on which he had fallen.

"Oh! Sir, allow me to beg your pardon," he blandly said.

"Come on, come on, gentlemen," was his word of command, pronounced in gentle, simpering accents. Shouldering his fiddle bow, he skipped onward, smiling placidly, and marking the time of the entrancing march by his buoyant step.

Taking the three yeomanry Corps of my recollection as I have endavoured to describe them, a question arises, whether our "Legion," or our "Tombstone Rangers," or yet the musical Captain H———'s Corps, would have proved themselves effective defenders of the throne, had there been need of their services?

Note, page 129, *Chap.* 12.

The manufacture of pikes was not carried on in the County of Wexford until the beginning of the year 1798, because, in fact, the County of Wexford was the last of the Irish counties penetrated by the rebel organizers. Generally through the more southern and midland counties they were manufactured at almost every rural smithy during 1797. In the very centre of the city of Kilkenny, a smith named Duggan had established a factory of these fierce weapons in that year. His forge existed where livery stables are now established, close to the city public walk, where persons passed continuously. He reckoned, as I could learn, that the publicity of the situation was less creative of suspicion, than if his forge fire blazed in a more lonely spot. Duggan's factory immediately joined the back lawn of Kilkenny Castle. The massive bounding wall of the Castle grounds was perforated; beyond the wall an excavation was found, as had been reckoned on. Through the open in the wall the pikes were pitched, as they came reeking from the anvil—it was judged, into a secure hiding place until they should be wanted.

On information received from such a character as the "Rattling Bill" of the story, Duggan's store-house was entered, and more than one cart-load of weapons brought to view. The ingenious pike-making smith was hanged forthwith on the permanently existing gallows at the gaol door.

Note, page 131, *Chap.* 21.

The ire of Shawn-a-Gow against his wife, on the score of parentage, is

not exaggerated. I was myself acquainted with a surly, domineering husband, who took it into his head that his wife was chargeable with the disappointment he experienced at being presented with a succession of daughters, when he had reckoned on being the father of sons, whose avocations he had previously decided on, and whose utility to himself, when his time of rest from labour came, he had pre-arranged.

Note, page 139, *Chap.* 21.

The jugglery of "Rattlin' Bill" with Mrs. Delouchery's bracket hen may be practised by any one wishing to repeat the apparent act of diablerie. It is not necessary that the hen operated on should be a bracket hen—a hen of any colour will suit the purpose. A small quantity of blood tied up in a piece of bladder should be provided, in the first instance, to be used at the proper moment, as "Rattlin' Bill" used it. Snatch up a hen, bend the neck suddenly, without injuring it, and place the head under the upper portion of the wing: this cleverly done, seize the surprised fowl by the legs, grasping the lower extremities of the wings at the same time. Swing the creature round three or four times by a circular motion of the arm, then place her on the ground, lying on the wing beneath which the head is concealed. She will so remain for some minutes apparently lifeless and headless.

By taking her up again, and releasing the head from its durance, the bewitched hen may be placed on her feet. For a while she will stalk about and stare around, as if to recognise the sublunary objects from which she had been separated, she cannot tell how, nor for what length of time; as if, in fact, she had but just returned from the land where the spirits of domestic fowl dwell after they have departed from amongst the living.

It is accounted most unlucky, unlucky because an unnatural occurrence, that a hen should crow. Even those housewives, who assume the entire domestic authority, and who "cock-crow" or "hen-peck" their husbands, would not harbour a hen that might outstep her feminine submissiveness, by attempting the masculine note of the cock.

Rattling Bill may, in the instance given in the tale, have belied the bracket hen, and crowed himself.

Note, page 145, *Chap.* 22.

Although the character of Peter Rooney is but a slight sketch, because of little importance to the Story, yet I wish to make a note with reference to him.

I have not drawn on my fancy when introducing Peter Rooney. In my boyhood, a tailor, Tom Dooley, was frequently pointed out to me, whose person and accessories I have outlined as Peter Rooney.

Tom Dooley, of John's Green, was, as Peter Rooney is stated to have been, a very small man. There was, however, an air of self-appreciation about him, not demonstrative or exacting, and a gravity of look and demeanour, both of which, combined with his careful decency of attire, were creative of respect towards him. His pace, as he passed along our streets, was deliberate and firm; and although of diminutive stature, walked onward as if he considered himself entitled to considera-

The constant salutations given him as he stepped on, were ial and deferential, and he retured the greetings of "Good morrow

and good luck, Mr. Dooley"—or "God speed you, Mr. Dooley"—or "God save you kindly, Mr. Dooley," with a grave smile, and a condescending recognition, as if he considered the good will expressed towards him as his due.

In the year 1798, Tom Dooley had been secretary to a "Baronial" society of United Irishmen. His person and a portion of his official papers were suddenly seized on, in the April of that year: the most important of his documents, the muster-roll of the members, was not, however, to be found.

From the close of the year 1797, to an advanced period of 1798, a triangle and a gallows, were permanent erections at the gaol door of Kilkenny. And a Court-martial, of which those two structures were the addenda, held its almost continuous sittings in the Court-house above the gaol.

Tom Dooley was, immediately after his apprehension, brought before the Court-martial. Short trial was requisite in his case. The papers found in his possession, fully identifying him with the treason of the day, were amply conclusive against him without the necessity for *vivâ voce* testimony.

There was no hesitation in declaring him guilty of high treason; but it was a matter of deliberation with the Court, whether he was to be sent down the Court-house steps, and hanged instanter, or whether it were more advisable to postpone his execution, with the view of obtaining from him the names of the rebels he had enrolled. Tom Dooley coolly but resolutely refused to give the information required. It was not many paces from the bench to the triangle, and in less than one hour following his arrest, he was bound thereto, naked from the waist upward.

The sentence of the Court was, that unless he pointed out by name every Croppy in his "Baronial society," he should receive three hundred lashes of the "Cat-o'-nine-tails." The "big drummer" of a regiment quartered in the city, a gigantic Negro, this "big drummer" was, occupied the post of "cat-o'-nine-tails" executioner—and Tom Dooley was to suffer three hundred lashes inflicted by this expert and unflinching Negro. The alternative was placed before him as soon as he was firmly bound to the triangle, but Tom Dooley as coolly and as resolutely as before, refused to betray his brother-rebels. When fifty lashes had been counted, the same proposal was made to him. Still he answered nay. The Negro wielded his cat again. Fifty additional lashes were inflicted. Although Tom Dooley could not give his negative in as stout a voice as before, still it was a negative he uttered. The three hundred lashes, laid on by the strong arm of the now enraged Negro, were inflicted, and Tom Dooley, in a state of insensibility, was taken down from the triangle. They sound almost like a profanity the words Tom Dooley used while writhing under the torture, yet I give them as recorded and repeated to me. His constant exclamation—at first loud and sturdy, but gradually subsiding to a murmur, was—"It is nothing to the suffering of my Saviour."

Tom Dooley was tied up a second time to the triangle, after an interval of a few days, and improbable as it may seem, that any being of flesh and blood could exist under the ordeal, two hundred additional lashes were given by the Negro. Tom Dooley was unbound, apparently lifeless, and thrown carelessly by, to expire at his leisure.

The Mayor of Kilkenny in 1798, a Mr. E—— ds, had a compassionate heart. Many acts of humanity, even to the extent of screening and harbouring those suspected or accused of treason, I have heard related of him—This humane magistrate, Mr. E——ds, was Tom Dooley's Good Samaritan. He smuggled the senseless sufferer to a hiding place. Under his care the little man recovered; and when it came about, as it did not long afterwards, that a General Officer was specially missioned to receive the submission of repentant Croppies, Tom Dooley received what was called "a protection," that is, a document protecting him from further prosecution as a rebel.

It was told to me by those who pointed out Tom Dooley to my notice, that, from the time he had been scourged by the big Negro, he had not laughed, so deeply had the punishment he received affected his animal spirits.

The circumstance related offers an explanation, why it was that Tom Dooley regarded himself as one entitled to public deference; and the narrative will farther give a reason why he was so cordially and respectfully saluted, as he went along, by former foes, as well as by those he had not betrayed.

As the time has passed, when any advocacy of the cause for which they suffered, might be interpreted as a motive, I am tempted to relate a second instance of Croppy resolution and fidelity, which occurred in Kilkenny, in 1798.

Michael Quigley was a linen and woollen-draper, in good business, living in that portion of the main street called "Coal-market." Within view of his windows was the Court-house, where, as stated in the preceding portion of this note, the Court-martial, which had superseded the regular tribunal of judge and jury, sat daily. At a few paces from Michael Quigley's shop-door, the stationary gallows and triangle, fixtures at the gaol door, could be seen.

Michael Quigley was secretary to an "Upper-baronial" society of "United Irishmen." And his cognizance of the individuals of the body, whose books he kept, was more extensive and certain than that of little Tom Dooley.

In consequence of private information received by what was named "The Secret Committee," the informer not appearing openly, Michael Quigley was apprehended while engaged behind his counter. As he saw the military guard enter his shop, and knew that escape was impossible, he hastily embraced his wife, and whispered into her ear—"God be with you for ever."

He was hurried across the street, up the steps leading to the Court-house, and before the tribunal of the day. In half an hour from the time of his arrest he heard his sentence.—He was to be hanged next morning opposite his own door.

But, as in the case of Tom Dooley, there was a proviso. His life was to be spared, provided he gave in a full and authentic list of the society to which he belonged, and appeared as evidence against those so denounced. It was unusual to defer the execution of a sentence of death, but, in Michael Quigley's instance, his life was prolonged, that he might have leisure to contemplate the alternative offered him. The condemned man prayed that a clergyman might be permitted to attend him, but his petition was curtly and harshly refused.

During the night Michael Quigley's resolution did not waver. Early in the morning, he tore a piece from his cravat, and wrote one line on it with his pencil. This he contrived to convey to his wife. It said,

"I will die, I will not be a traitor."

He received one line in return in his wife's handwriting—

"Better make one widow than one hundred."

Michael Quigley had been himself the arranger of a stratagem, by which the sentence of "Death without benefit of clergy," the formula of the period, might, as regarded the spiritual portion of the doom, be in a degree evaded.

Directly fronting the gaol-door there was a window over an archway. Access to this window could be gained by passing through unobserved lanes—in through a back-door, and thence up the stairs of the house to which the window gave light, and so to the window. Before this window a thick curtain was suspended, so that those inside could see what was passing abroad, while those behind the curtain could not be seen from without. Behind this screen, every day, while "benefit of clergy" was denied to those doomed to death, a Roman Catholic Clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Reynolds, I give his name without disguise, attended, and he was accompanied by three "pious men." The late Robert Hennessey, of High-street, was one, the names of the other two I have not learned.

The Priest and the three "pious men" were there daily for a special purpose, and what this purpose was, the condemned Michael Quigley, (he, as I have said, having been himself the concoctor of the strategy,) knew well.

When he passed through the gaol-door on his way to the gallows, that had overnight been erected in front of his house, he looked towards the window over the archway: a corner of the screening curtain was raised and allowed to fall suddenly. While his guards were forming a cordon round him, he removed his hat, and looked upward intently. He smote his breast, and his lips quivered in prayer. He was employed professing contrition for his sins, and craving pardon. He made use of the form of prayer known, to those practising the Roman Catholic religion, as, "An Act of Contrition."

When Michael Quigley, outside the prison door, removed his hat, the three "pious men" attending on the priest, knelt and prayed for him. And when he replaced his hat, the signal that his "Act of Contrition" had been made, the Rev. Mr. Reynolds raised his hand, and pronounced the formula of absolution, as used at the confessional. Then Michael Quigley walked on firmly to meet his death.

Even during his suspension on the gibbet, a number of mocking women, and a few others, had assembled at the closed door of his shop.

These were the wives of the soldiers of the garrison, who had come there to make profit by the death of the proprietor. According to the invariable usage of the time, Michael Quigley's house was to be given up to pillage, and the women were there to receive the spoil from the sackers.

The gallows, and the body suspended from it, had been scarcely taken away, when a lady, gallantly mounted and gallantly attended, rode down the street. This was Lady Asgill, wife to the General Officer in command of the district, and who was also president of the overworked Court-martial sitting in the Court-house.

Lady Asgill was interrupted in her progress by the throng of women congregated to scramble for the goods in the shop of the late Michael Quigley. While Lady Asgill was making enquiries and receiving information, a woman rushed out of the beleaguered house. She held the hand of a child in each of hers, and a third child clung to her mantle. The children whose hands she held were two little girls, the child clinging to her mantle, a boy. The woman flung herself on her knees, at the feet of the lady's horse, and prayed for protection.

The lady looked down on the suppliant, and although she had the reputation of being a bold, dashing, careless lady, there was a feminine heart within her bosom. She listened to the petitioner's story, and she promised the protection craved.

From her husband, who presided near at hand over the Cour-tmartial. she obtained an order that Michael Quigley's house should not be wrecked.

I remember the Mrs. Quigley, who had written to her husband that it was better "to make one widow than one hundred." In my boyish days she was a comely woman, beyond her fiftieth year, with a mild, placid expression of face. In consequence of Lady Asgill's interference, her house was not given up to plunder. The two little girls she held by the hand when she preferred her prayer, I remember as two blooming young girls. With the son who clung to her mantle I was acquainted. He was a remarkably handsome and a talented young fellow. He died in his eighteenth year.

Note, page 149, *Chap.* 22.

The people of the County Wexford, were not, preceding the insurrection, nor have they since been noted as a disaffected or turbulent portion of the population of Ireland. In the County Wexford, the English, under Strongbow, made their descent, and the Wexford peasantry have, in my judgment, an under-current of English blood in their veins. They are not so impulsive as are those of unmixed Irish breed, and they are more forethinking, more unflinching, and more persevering, than are those of unalloyed Celtic descent. The people of two baronies of the county Wexford speak a corruption of the Saxon tongue.

It was not until the November of 1797, two years after propagation elsewhere, that the then disarranged "United Irish" conspiracy made its way into the County Wexford. On its introduction there, it had assumed a character, at variance, in a most material respect, with that proclaimed at its first installation.

It is a matter of history, that when the United Irish conpsiracy was first concocted, it was not framed by its originators as a partial or exclusive confederacy, but as a combination to include all Irishmen, without reference to creed or locality. From the Protestant north, where the programme was contrived and devised, (be it noted) by Protestants, to the extreme south, it was planned by the architects of the structure, that all Irishmen should combine, and imbued with the evil spirit of the French revolutionists, establish a republic, no matter at what cost, on the ruin of British power in Ireland.

When, late in the year 1797, the infection reached the county Wexford, it was not as originally devised, an amalgamation of creeds. It

had then become a dire religious feud. The Protestant population ranged at one side, the Roman Catholic population on the other. The Protestant population, while professing fealty to British rule, were mainly influenced in their choice as adherents by their detestation of Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholics rebelled against the state, chiefly, if not altogether, because the Protestants were ranged as its supporters. In fact, the characteristic contemplated by the northern plotters and, embodied in the United Irishman's oath, "To form a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen of every religious persuasion," was not only repudiated, but antipathy of creeds, was then the animating principle, hurrying the opponents and the adherents of the government to choose sides.

How this rejection of the original element of the United Irish conspiracy came about has been glanced at in the introductory chapter to this tale. Commentators on the period have not failed to go farther than insinuation to say, that the reversal of the United Irish test oath was the result of diplomatic device on the part of the ruling powers of the day; and that the ancient hatred of creeds was evoked, and covertly brought into activity as the cheapest and most effectual process, by which the treasonable confederacy known to be in existence might be prevented from obtaining the importance of a national confederacy.

My study of the history of the period convinces me that this is an exaggerated interpretation of facts; but it is my conviction, at the same time, that if the aggression of one religious section on the other, particularly in the north, was not planned and brought into service by the government from 1795 to 1798, the baneful feeling created, was contemplated, if not encouraged, as a game to result to the advantage of the state.

My object in noticing here this yet undemonstrated problem, goes no farther than as a testimony to the fact, I wish to have understood, that in 1797, the Catholics of the County Wexford believed, as if it were gospel truth, that their Protestant fellow-countrymen, one and all, had sworn "to wade knee-deep in Papist blood;" and the Protestants gave equally implicit credence to the fact diligently promulgated, that their fellow-countrymen were banded together, and had pledged themselves on oath, to fulfil the purpose of their confederacy, the slaughter of all Protestants.

With those convictions and hatreds on either side, the consequence must, of necessity follow, that when collision took place, it was bitter and ferocious.

Taking into account the generally orderly character of the people of Wexford, and seeing that the infection of rebellious principles did not reach that portion of the country until after it had spread everywhere else; it is my conviction that there would have been no actual outbreak of the Wexfordians, if they had not been provoked to retaliation, in return for outrages committed on them, under the name of preventive measures; and I am of opinion, that when the outbreak did take place, it was as much an indulgence of religious hatred, the worst hatred of any, as of actual disaffection to the state.

Note, page 265, *Chap.* 31.

While engaged examining the old wind-mill on the summit of Vinegar-hill, and looking on the attractive panorama within view, I was

joined by a respectable, well-clad peasant, of advanced age, and of quiet, subdued demeanor. It was a foolish, useless business, he admitted, that "rising out" of '98—but the people could not help it—He himself had had no notion of "taking to the hills," until his house was burned by the North Cork men;—and his wife shot—himself barely escaping. It appeared to him at the time, that he might as well lose his life in battle, as in his own farm-yard. This man described the scene of slaughter, perpetrated on Vinegar-hill, and pointed out to me how the burial of the slain was effected. A deep trench was dug at the base of the eminence, the bodies were laid therein, and the earth and stones from above, tumbled down to fill up the excavation.

He expressed his abhorrence of the cold-blooded deeds there committed. Fair fighting, he told me, he had taken part in throughout, with a heart and a half;—from the first revenge on the "North Cork men," at Oulard-hill, until the final retreat through Scullogh Gap, into the County Carlow, and County Kilkenny. The fair-fighting men, he asserted, were not the perpetrators of the murders at Vinegar-hill, or at Scullabogue, or elsewhere.

Vinegar-hill, he stated, was a place of rendezvous during the time of the insurrection, and here a crowd of cowards and skulkers resorted, who had not the courage to encounter an open and armed enemy. These never joined in any contest with the yeomanry or soldiery. Cowards, he insisted on it, were always treacherous and bloody-minded; and thgrouhout the rebellion, the murderers were those who had not the manliness to face an enemy. They gained a name for themselves, and shewed their zeal for the cause, by slaughtering the defenceless.

Murtoch Kane, the real name of the stable-boy at Enniscorthy, who had never been in a battle from the beginning to the end of the campaign, was the inciter of the slaughter at Vinegar-hill, my informant told me; and not one man abbetting him but was, like himself, a skulker.

Extracts from my Note Book.

"The 26th of February, 1797, General Sir Ralph Abercrombie, then Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, issued a general order to the troops. In this document the soldiery is described as "in a state of licentiousness, which made it formidable to every one but the enemy."

"The 30th of March, the Government resolved that martial law should replace the civil law, and the soldiery be empowered to use such means as might be considered effectual to suppress sedition."

"The 29th of April, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, giving as his reason for the resolution he had formed, that the unbridled coercive measures to be adopted, must produce, and not suppress, insurrection, resigned his command."

"Immediately after his departure from Ireland, the military were sent out in different places on free quarters, and practised all the licentiousness deprecated by the old General."

"In my opinion, the forces sent, ill-commanded, and with some exceptions, ill-officered, promoted the previous irritation and subsequent timidity."

"A man named McQuillan, (a supposed emissary of the United Irish confederacy,) was detected in April, 1798, spreading a report that the French had landed at Bantry—that the regular military force and yeomanry were to march against them, but that before they did so, there was to be a universal massacre of the Catholics—so that the people generally fled from their houses, and passed their nights under any screen that gave them shelter."

"Reports of a like nature prevailed with the Protestants. It was confidently believed by them that the Catholics were to rise in a body, on the 29th of April, and slay all differing with them in creed."

"Some commanders of the yeomanry were ferocious and cruel, and some were not; those who were humane concealed their kind acts from the public eye, lest they should by implication be accused of complicity with traitors."

"Previous to the breaking out of the insurrection, the North Cork regiment of militia burned houses in every direction, and shot and flogged, and otherwise tortured any one they pleased. The wanton exercise of power to which men are prone, the gratification of antipathy, and the demonstration, by overt acts, of fidelity to the state, were sufficient motives for this line of conduct."

"Orange principles were not known in the County Wexford until introduced by the North Cork Militia, in April, 1798. This regiment introduced, at the same time, the torture of the pitch cap and half hanging."

"It was generally believed by the Protestants, previous to the insurrection, that a brief oath had been sworn by the Catholics, in these words, 'Every loyal Protestant I shall murder, and this I swear.'"

From the initials of this oath it was believed that a pass-word had been formed, thus,

"Elpismatis."

"The 24th of May, 1798, (three days previous to the Wexford outbreak,) twenty-eight prisoners were shot in the Ball-alley of Carnew. Some of these had been arrested on suspicion, and some were under sentence of transportation."

"The 23rd of May, thirty-four prisoners were, without any trial, shot in Dunlavin—the informer at whose instance they had been arrested shared the same fate as his victims."

The late organization of the County of Wexford.

"The 12th of March, 1798, there was a meeting of delegates from all

the United Irish societies of Ireland, held in Bridge-street, Dublin. There was no representative at this meeting from the County of Wexford, nor any return showing its organization."

"It was not until the 20th of April, 1798, that the County of Wexford was declared to be under martial law, by a meeting of the county magistrates, held at Gorey."

"When the insurrection broke out there, there were not quartered in the whole County of Wexford, more than six hundred of militia and other troops—to these were to be added the yeomanry and "the black mob," the latter without uniform, but provided by the government with arms and ammunition."

The aspect of the Country after the Outbreak.

"The morning of Whit-Sunday, the 27th of May, two large bodies of insurgents had assembled on Oulard-hill, and another on Kilthomas-hill, that at Oulard, where the number was less than at Kilthomas, was a confused multitude of both sexes, and of all ages."

"The country exhibited one scene of distress and consternation, houses in flames everywhere, and families flying on all sides for asylum; the loyalists to the towns, the others to the hills."

"The first contest between the insurgents and the military was on Oulard-hill. Here the militia was defeated—three of the detachment only escaped with life."

"The rebels on Kilthomas-hill were defeated, and one hundred houses were burned by the victors, in a distance of seven miles."

"Houses on every side were burned by the rebels—the country was one scene of conflagration—the military and yeomanry burning the houses of disaffected persons—thei nsurgents burning the houses of all supposed to be their enemies, and committing slaughter without mercy. When once insurrection took place, that it was attended with devastation and massacre, was naturally to be expected, from the previous exasperation of men's minds, and the deep sense of severities inflicted on some by authority, and in such case often justly, but on many others, by individuals invested with no other authority than what the affectation of violent zeal confers on the most worthless in such cases."

"The greatest cruelties and excesses perpetrated by the rebels, were committed by the cowards who never joined in any action—who went about under the pretext of levying necessaries for the camps, and who stopped at no excess of murder or spoliation."

"No religious murders were perpetrated at the Three Rocks, Carrick, Byrne, or Slieve Kilter, or Lacken, all places of large encampment, 'n of consideration or education held command."

"In popular commotions, it has been generally observed that virtue or talent goes but a little way to procure influence; the leader of a mob is almost invariably he who outdoes all the rest in audacity."

"Amid all their other atrocities, the chastity of the fair sex was respected. I have not been able to ascertain one instance to the contrary, in the County of Wexford, although many beautiful young women were in their (the rebels') power. The reverse was the conduct of the soldiery, and friend or foe made no difference."

I have made those few extracts from as great a bulk of notes as would form a volume, for the purpose of showing that the judgment I formed of the period, and the representations of the Tale in connexion with the Wexford insurrection, have been painstaking, and are truthful.

MICHAEL BANIM.

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